



Date: June 11, 2024

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Author and title: Alfred Knotts, Transportation Program Manager

Title: Town Essential Services Public Opinion Survey Results and Direction on November 2024  
Ballot Measure

Jen Callaway, Town Manager

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**Recommended Action:** Staff recommends Council:

- 1) Receive an update on the May 2024 Public Opinion Survey results
- 2) Direct Staff to return to the June 25, 2024 Council meeting with proposed ballot language and all necessary supporting documents required for a ballot measure to be placed on the November 2024 ballot

**Discussion:**

The consultant team of Team CivX will provide a presentation to the Council at the June 11, 2024 Town Council meeting on the methodology, topline data, and conclusions of the survey to assist Council in making an informed decision on how to proceed with this information. Summary information on the survey results can also be found in Attachment A – “General Sales Tax Survey Summary Presentation” with more detailed information contained in Attachment B - “General Sales Tax Survey Summary Report”

Finally, as part of the June 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, staff is also seeking direction from Council to return to Council on June 25, 2024 to obtain final approval of placement of a ballot measure on the November 2024 ballot. Time is of the essence as this would be the final meeting of the Town Council before the July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 statutory deadline for November 2024 ballot measures to be submitted to the Nevada County Clerk/Recorders office for consideration by voters.

Below is DRAFT ballot language for Council to review and consider in advance of the June Council meetings.

***Truckee Essential Services Measure.*** *To protect essential Town of Truckee services such as keeping public areas/ facilities/ parkways safe, clean and well- maintained; protecting creeks/ waterways from pollution; preparing for wildfires/ natural disasters; providing transit to reduce traffic/ keep seniors/ people with disabilities independent; and for general government use, shall the measure be adopted establishing a 1/2% sales tax paid by visitors/ residents, providing approximately \$3,500,000 annually until ended by voters, with all funds audited/ locally controlled?*

Staff would like to note this language differs slightly from the ballot language presented to respondents of the May 2024 survey and contained in attachments A and B. The revisions are minor in nature but have been modified based on information gleaned from the survey effort as to read in a structure that is clearer and more concise.

**Priority:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Enhanced Communication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Climate and Greenhouse Gas Reduction	<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Infrastructure Investment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Emergency and Wildfire Preparedness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Core Service

**Fiscal Impact:**

An additional ½% sales tax increment would generate approximately \$3.5 million annually to fund municipal services to Truckee residents. Not pursuing that increment would result in maintaining existing Town revenue streams as is but will limit the Council’s ability to fund new programs and to continue funding the existing TART Connect program beyond FY 24/25.

**Public Communication:**

January 23, 2024 Staff Report authorizing Team CivX Contract Amendment

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: Team CivX/True North “General Sales Tax Survey Summary Presentation”

Attachment B: Team CivX/True North “General Sales Tax Survey Summary Report”

# **ATTACHMENT A**

# GENERAL SALES TAX SURVEY

CONDUCTED FOR THE  
TOWN OF TRUCKEE

PRESENTED BY  
TIMOTHY McLARNEY PH.D.

6/4/2024





# PURPOSE OF STUDY

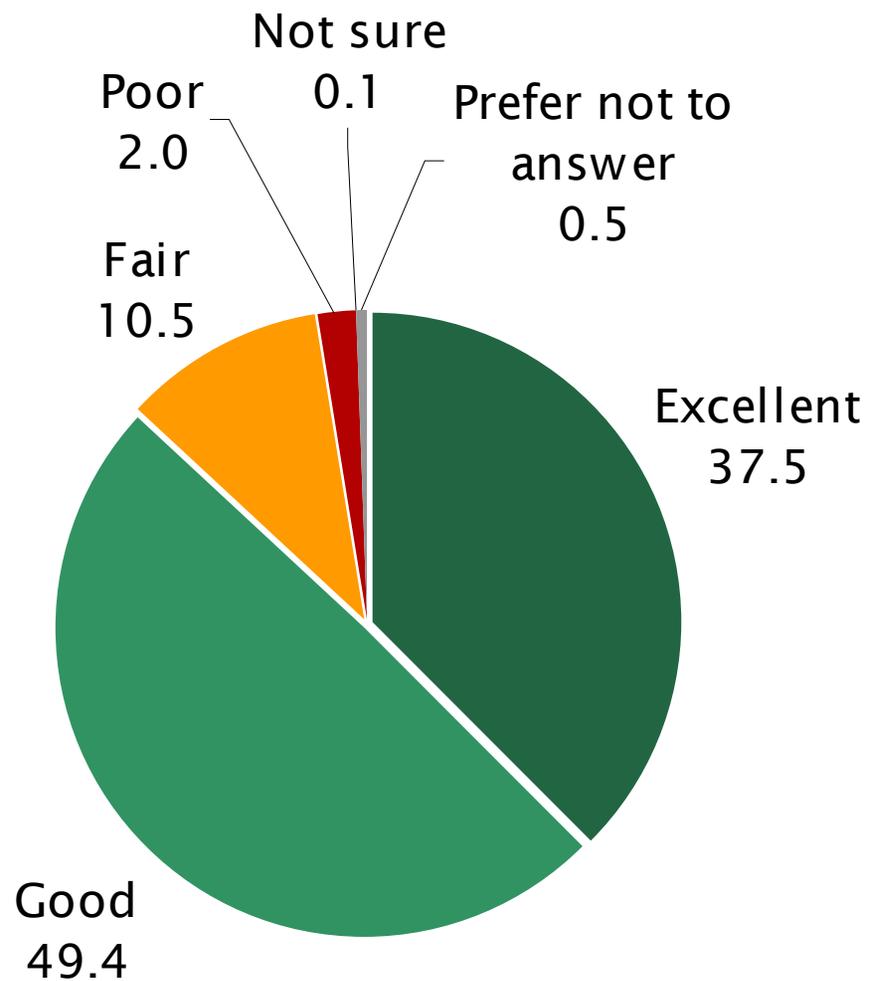
- Determine if a general sales tax measure is feasible
- Identify how to create a measure consistent with community priorities
- Gather information needed for communications & outreach



# METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

- **How did we select voters to survey?**
  - Stratified & Clustered Random Sample of likely November 2024 voters using age, gender, partisanship, household party type, and sub-geographies
  - Ensures balanced, representative sample of likely voters
- **How did we recruit participation?**
  - Personalized email, text, and telephone calls
  - PINs to restrict access and ensure one complete per respondent
- **How were voters able to share their opinions?**
  - Secure, PIN-protected website that scales to the device
  - Telephone (land line or mobile)
- **What was the sample size?**
  - 404 completed interviews
  - Overall margin of error of  $\pm 4.8\%$  @ 95% level of confidence

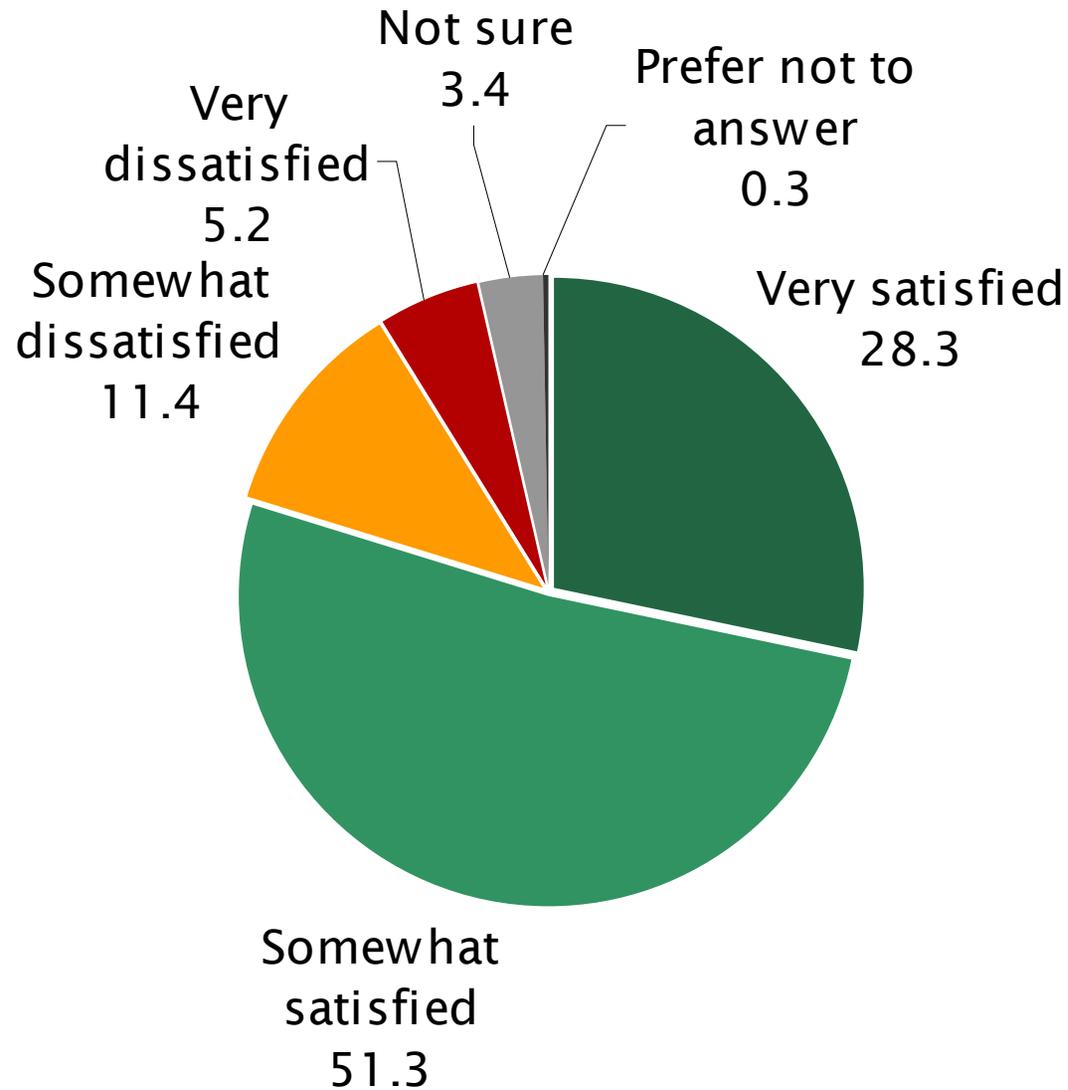
# QUALITY OF LIFE



# CHANGES TO IMPROVE TRUCKEE



# OVERALL SATISFACTION





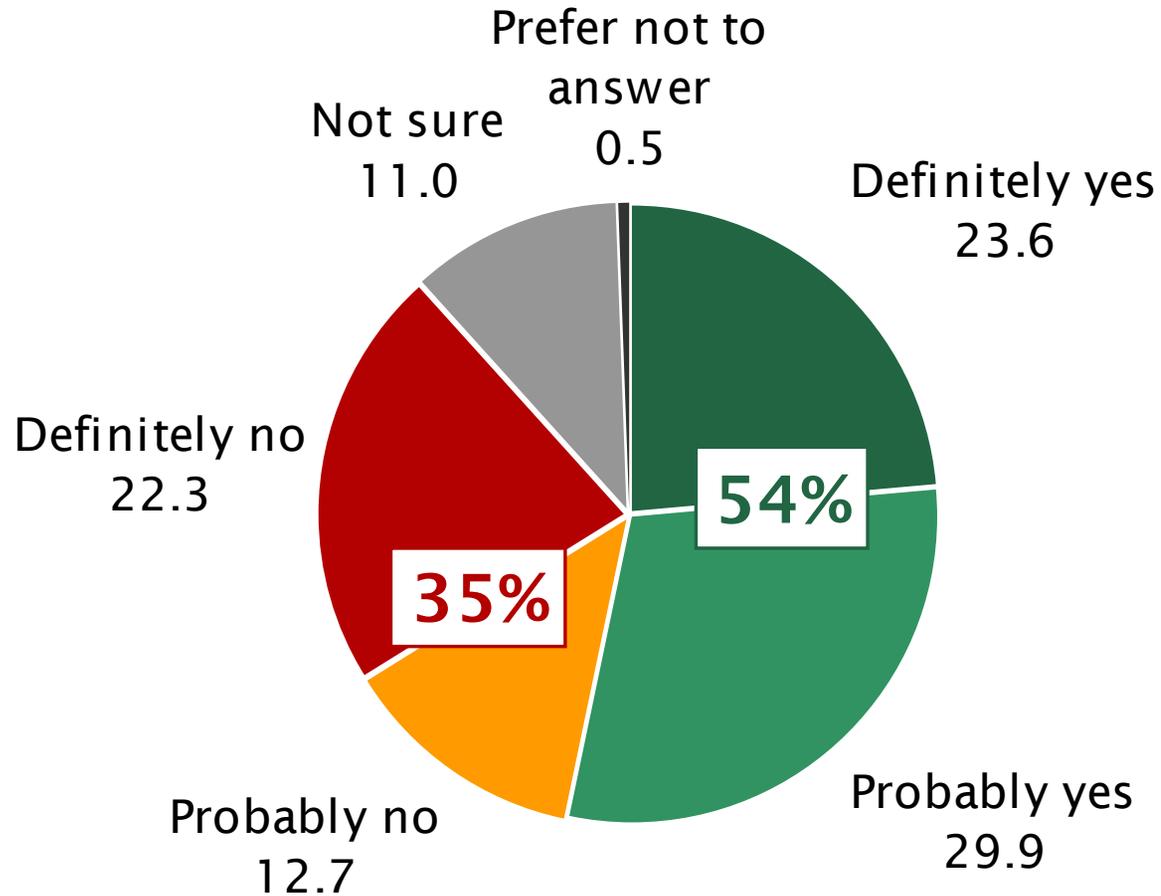
# INITIAL BALLOT TEST

**Truckee Essential Services Measure.** Shall the measure protecting essential Town services such as:

- Providing local transit, neighborhood shuttles, and TART Connect;
- Reducing traffic congestion;
- Protecting open space and the environment;
- Creating local workforce housing;
- and for general government use

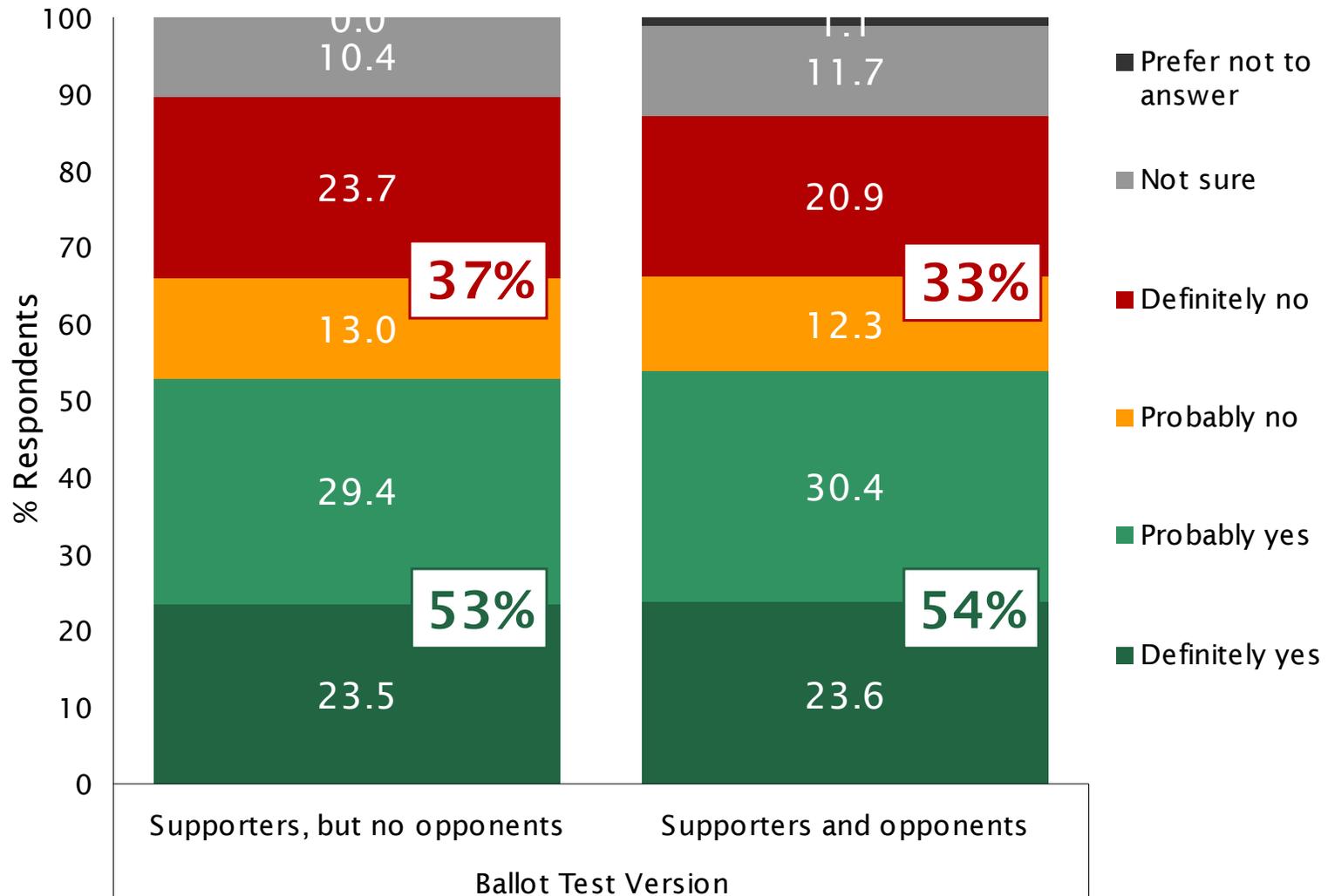
by establishing a ½% (one-half percent) sales tax, providing approximately \$3,500,000 annually until ended by voters, with independent audits and all funds staying local for Truckee, be adopted?

# INITIAL BALLOT TEST

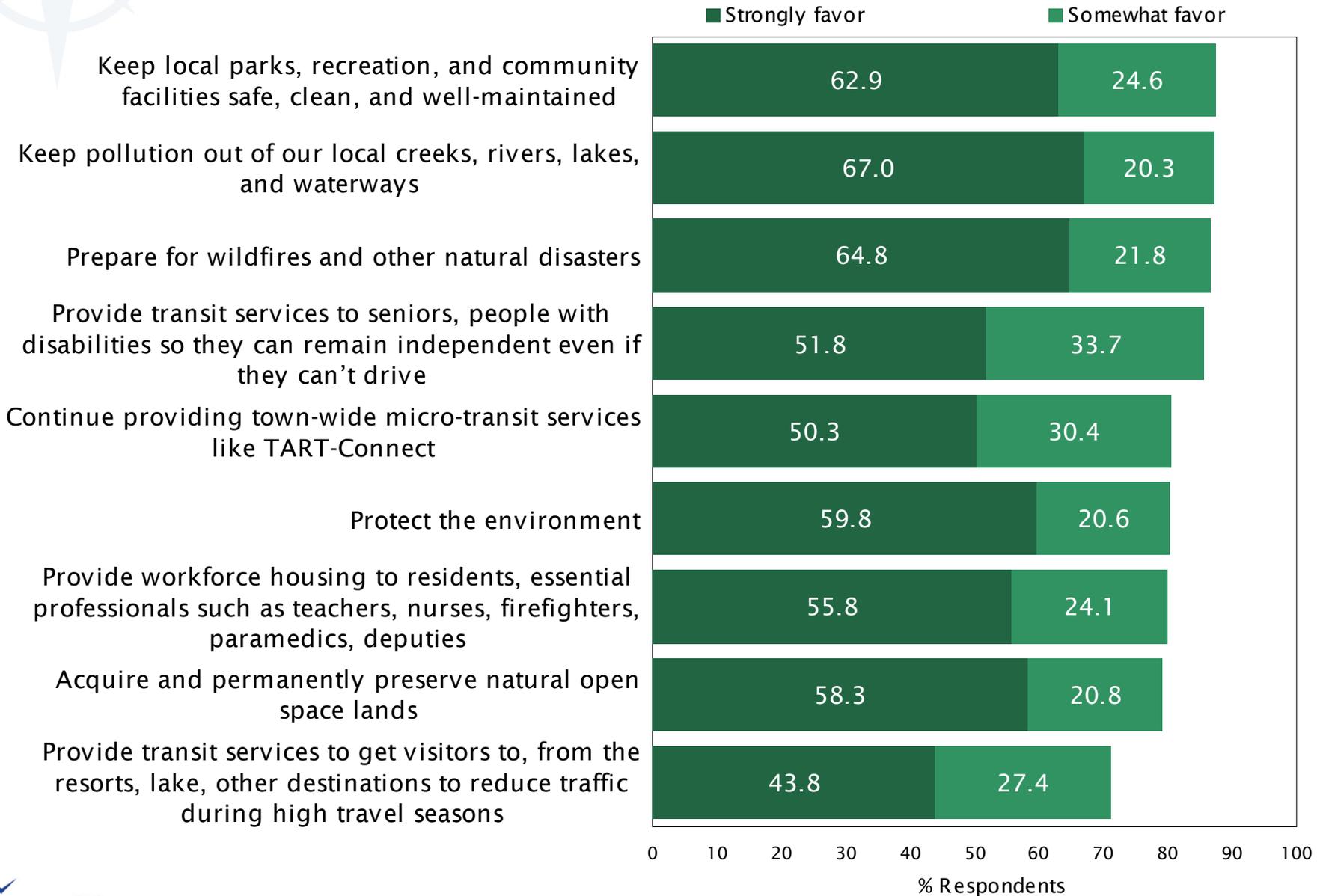


# INITIAL BALLOT TEST

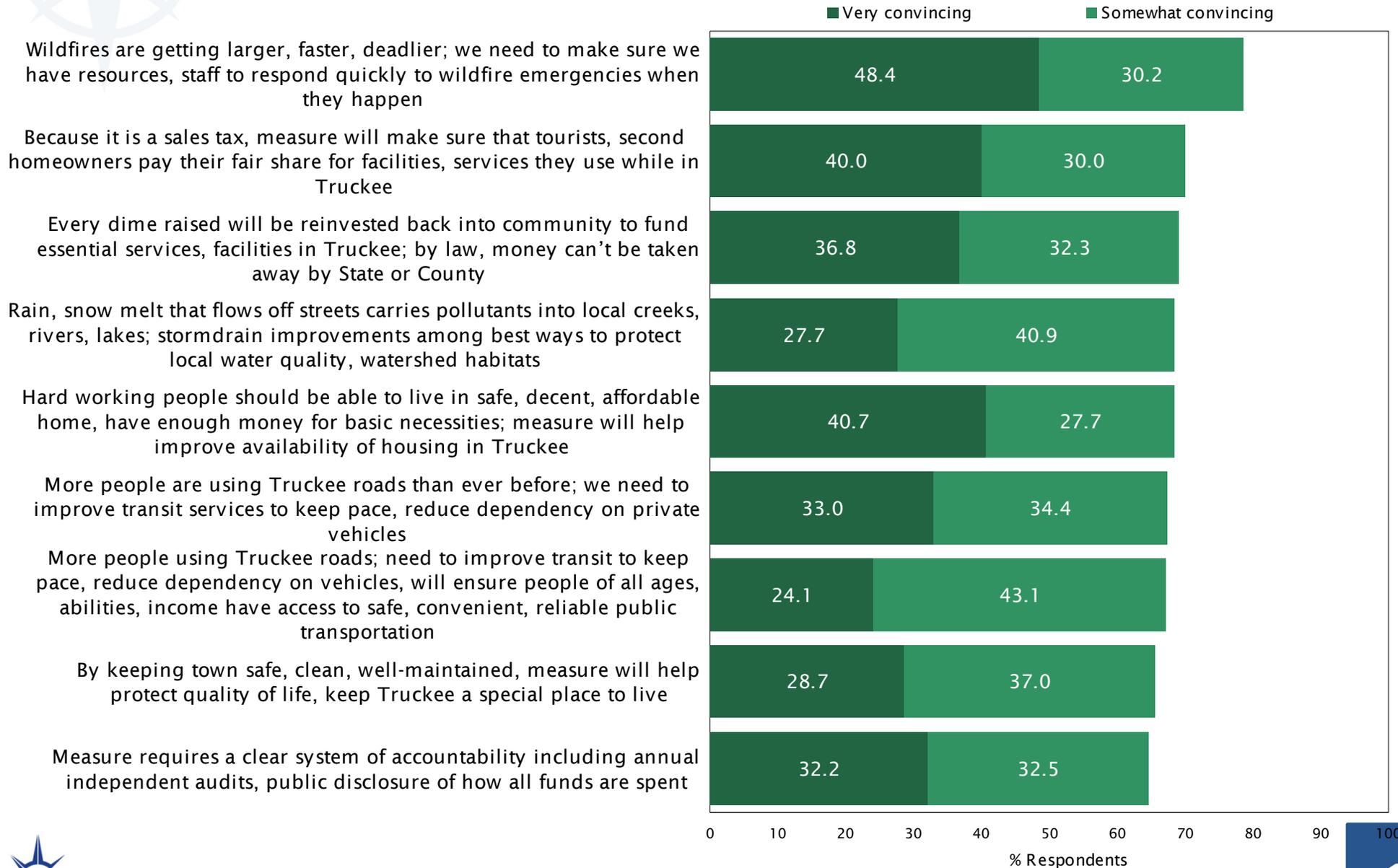
## BY BALLOT TEST VERSION



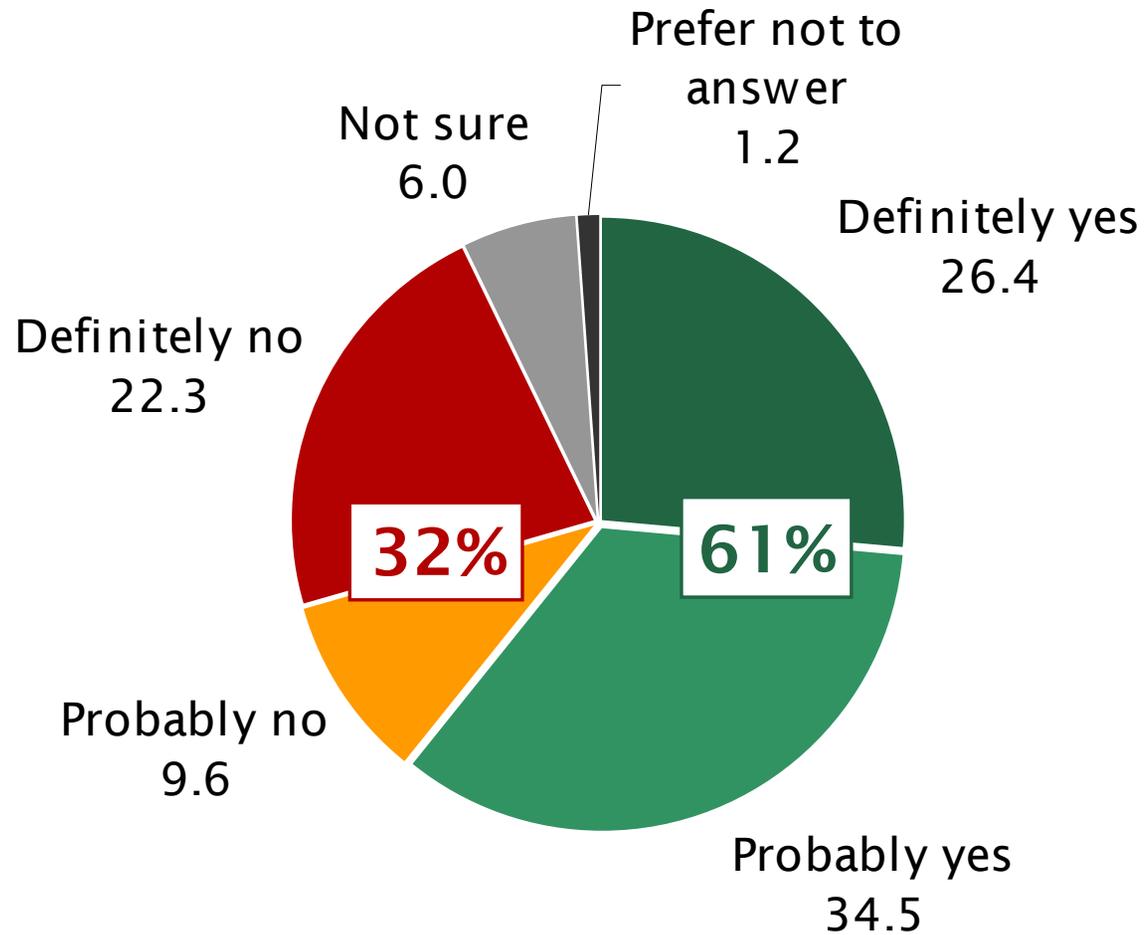
# PROJECTS & SERVICES



# POSITIVE ARGUMENTS



# INTERIM BALLOT TEST



# NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

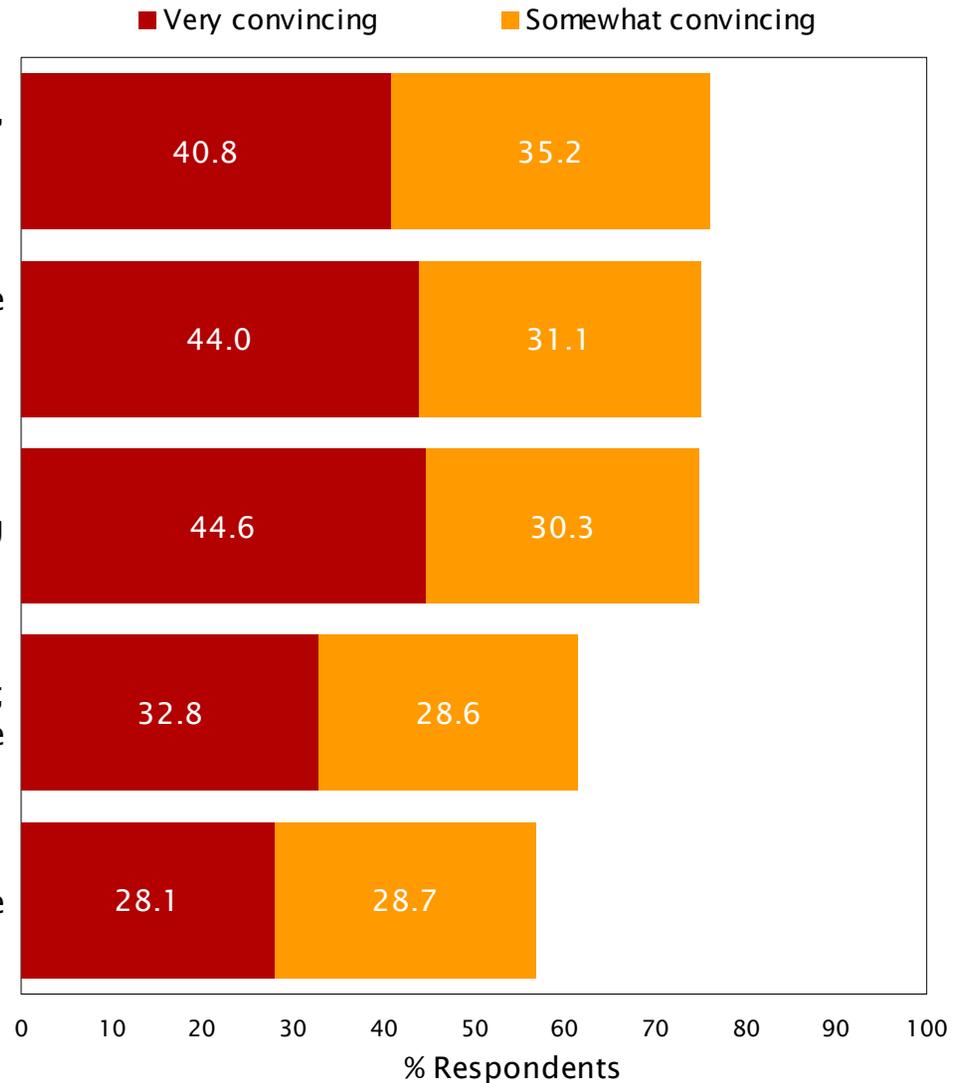
Local residents, businesses hit hard by runaway inflation, high interest rates, high gas prices; many are struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to raise taxes

Over past four years Truckee has increased trails tax, fire tax, hotel tax; now they want to increase taxes again? Enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes

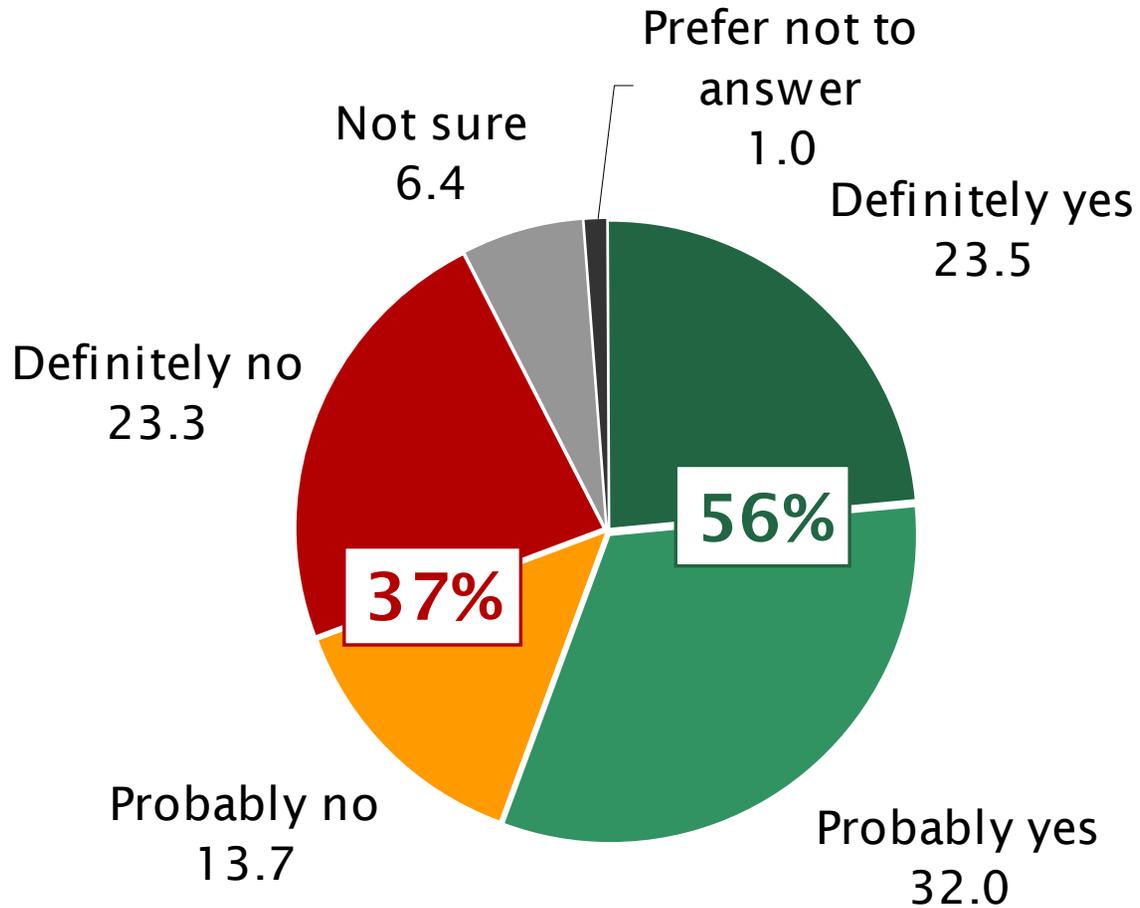
Truckee is an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed incomes; passing tax will make it even less affordable

There are no guarantees how funds will be spent, Town can divert money to pet projects without say from voters; can't trust Town with our tax dollars; will mismanage the money

If approved, this tax will last forever; it will never expire



# FINAL BALLOT TEST





# KEY CONCLUSIONS

- Does a general sales tax measure appear to be feasible for November 2024? **Yes.**

## Positive Signs

- Voters value the services they receive from the Town, but also see a need for improvements
- Sufficient natural support for measure to fund town services (54%)
- Popular projects and services
- Positive arguments resonate
- All ballot tests are above the simple majority (50%+1) required for passage of general tax, even after opposition arguments

## Challenges

- Receptiveness to potential opposition arguments (-5%)
- AB1416
- Electoral climate: Hyper-partisanship, statewide initiatives & cost sensitivity



# OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Snapshot in time, not a crystal ball**
- **Realign ballot language to better match voters' priorities:** Keep local parks, recreation, and community facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained; Keep pollution out of our local creeks, rivers, lakes, and waterways; Prepare for wildfires and other natural disasters.
- **Town Communications:** Expand the conversation with the community to build awareness of ongoing needs and consensus on a proposal.
- **Independent Campaign:** Need to have solid independent campaign to navigate through the election cycle, communicate key messages, turn out supporters, and weather uncertainties.

## **ATTACHMENT B**



**GENERAL SALES TAX SURVEY**  
SUMMARY REPORT FOR BASELINE SURVEY

PREPARED FOR THE  
**TOWN OF TRUCKEE**



MAY 2024



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## INTRODUCTION

Located in the Sierra Nevada mountains just west of the Nevada state line, the Town of Truckee is currently home to an estimated 16,778 residents.<sup>1</sup> Established in 1863 and incorporated in 1993, the Town of Truckee's team of full- and part-time employees provides a full suite of municipal services including administrative services, community development, public works and engineering, and police services. In addition to being a residential and economic hub for the region, Truckee is a popular vacation destination drawing visitors, tourists, and second homeowners to the area for its scenic beauty and recreational opportunities.

Over the past decade, the Town of Truckee's revenues have not kept pace with the growing costs associated with providing municipal services and facilities. Although the Town has been proactive in responding to this challenge by reducing its costs where feasible, streamlining services, 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 town services such as providing local transit services, neighborhood shuttles, and TART connect to reduce traffic congestion, protecting open space and the environment, creating additional workforce housing, and keeping local parks, recreation, and community facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained, the Town of Truckee is considering establishing a general sales tax measure.

**MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH** The primary purpose of this study was to produce an unbiased, *statistically reliable* evaluation of voters' interest in establishing one-half percent sales tax to fund general municipal services. Additionally, should the Town decide to move forward with a measure for the November 2024 ballot, the data can guide how best to structure the measure so it is consistent with voters' priorities and expressed needs. Specifically, the study was designed to:

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

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

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1. California Department of Finance estimate, January 2024.

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

**OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY** For a full discussion of the research methods and techniques used in this study, turn to *Methodology* on page 29. In brief, the survey was administered to a random sample of 404 voters in the Town of Truckee 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 phone) and multiple data collection methods (phone and online). Administered between May 14 and May 21, 2024, the average interview was 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 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 32) and a complete set of crosstabulations for the survey results is contained in Appendix A.

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

**DISCLAIMER** The statements and conclusions in this report are those of the authors (Dr. Timothy McLarney and Richard Sarles) at True North Research, Inc. and not necessarily those of the Town of Truckee. 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 successful local revenue measures.



## KEY FINDINGS

As noted in the *Introduction*, this study was designed to provide the Town of Truckee with a statistically reliable understanding of voters' interest in establishing a general sales tax to fund municipal services. Whereas subsequent sections of this report are devoted to conveying the detailed results of the survey, in this section we attempt to 'see the forest through the trees' and note how the collective results of the survey answer some of the key questions that motivated the research. The following conclusions are based on True North's and TeamCivX's interpretations of the survey results and the firms' collective experience conducting revenue measure studies for public agencies throughout the State.

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

Truckee voters value the services they receive from the Town, while also seeing opportunities for improvement. These sentiments translate into sufficient *natural* support (54%) for establishing a one-half percent sales tax to provide essential town services such as providing local transit, neighborhood shuttles, and TART Connect; reducing traffic congestion; protecting open space and the environment; creating local workforce housing; and for general government use.

The results of this survey indicate that a local sales tax measure may be 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 Town's or an independent campaign's control) and that a recommendation to place the measure on the November 2024 ballot comes with several qualifications and conditions. Indeed, although the results are promising, all revenue measures must overcome challenges prior to being successful. The proposed measure is no exception. The following paragraphs discuss some of the challenges and the next steps that True North and TeamCivX recommend.

*Which services do Truckee 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 flexibility with respect to what is funded by the measure on a year-to-year basis.

Although the Truckee Town Council would have the discretion to decide how to spend the sales tax revenues, the survey results indicate that voters are *primarily* interested in using the proceeds to keep local parks, recreation, and community facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained

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

(88% strongly or somewhat favor), keep pollution out of local creeks, rivers, lakes, and waterways (87%), prepare for wildfires and other natural disasters (87%), and provide transit services to seniors and people with disabilities so they can remain independent even if they can't drive (86%).

*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 to 61% at the Interim Ballot Test. However, voters also exhibited sensitivity to opposition arguments, and there is a risk that voters could be swayed by divisive and hyper-partisan campaigning during the 2024 election cycle. Accordingly, one of the keys to building and *sustaining* support for a local sales tax measure will be the presence of an effective, well-organized public outreach effort and a separate, 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 Town that a local sales tax measure may be feasible for the November ballot. Even with lingering concerns regarding inflation, high interest rates, high gas prices, and the trajectory of the economy, a clear majority of voters supported establishing a general sales tax to protect essential town 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.

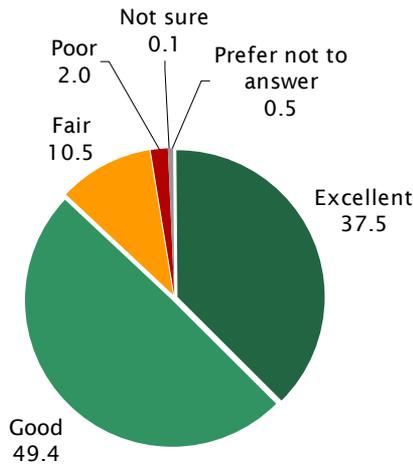
# QUALITY OF LIFE & TOWN SERVICES

The opening section of the survey was designed to gauge voters’ opinions regarding the quality of life in the Town of Truckee, their ideas for how it can be improved, as well as their assessment of the Town’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 Town of Truckee using a five-point scale of excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor. As shown in Figure 1 below, 87% of voters shared favorable opinions of the quality of life in Truckee, with 38% reporting it is excellent and 49% stating it is good. Approximately 11% of voters surveyed said the quality of life in the Town is fair, whereas just 2% used poor to describe the quality of life in the Town of Truckee (no respondents said very poor) and 1% were unsure or unwilling to state their opinion.

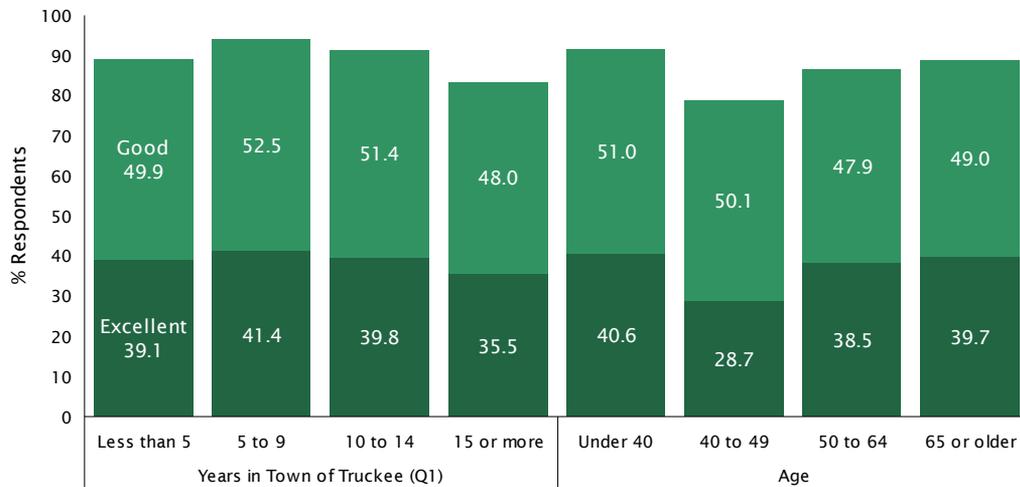
**Question 2** *How would you rate the overall quality of life in Truckee? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?*

**FIGURE 1 QUALITY OF LIFE**

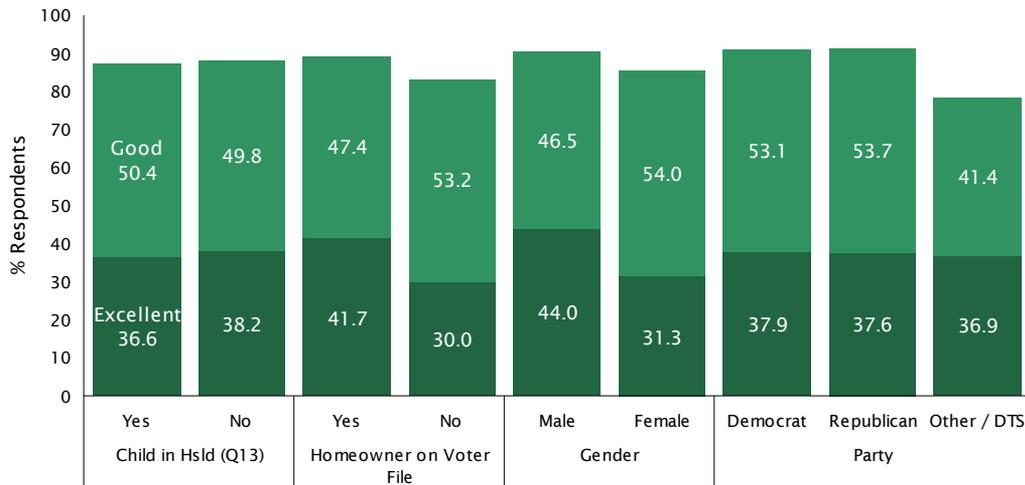


Figures 2 and 3 on the next page show how perceptions of the quality of life in Truckee varied by length of residence, age of the respondent, presence of a child in the home, homeownership status, gender, and partisanship. Perceptions of the quality of life in Truckee were consistently high across subgroups, ranging from a low of 78% to a high of 94% across all groups.

**FIGURE 2 QUALITY OF LIFE BY YEARS IN TOWN OF TRUCKEE & AGE**



**FIGURE 3 QUALITY OF LIFE BY CHILD IN HSLD, HOMEOWNER ON VOTER FILE, GENDER & PARTY**

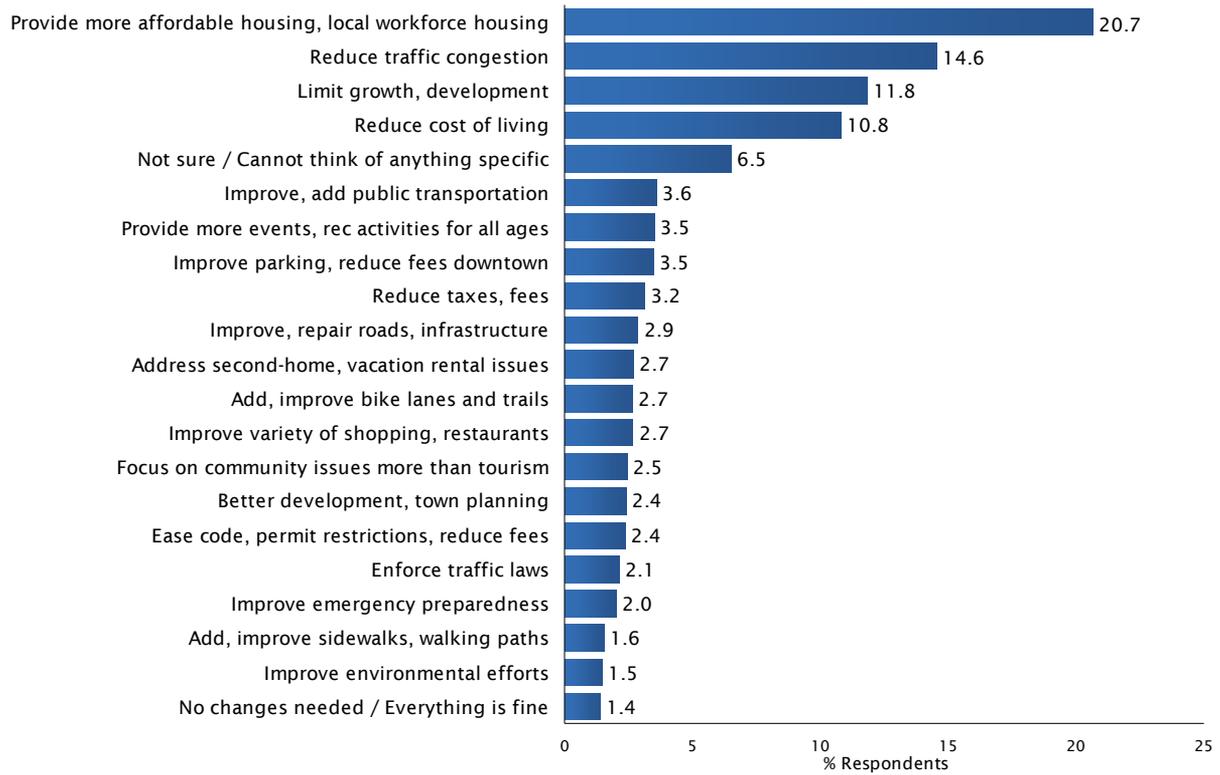


**CHANGES TO IMPROVE TRUCKEE** The next question in this series asked voters to indicate the one thing that the town government could *change* to make Truckee a better place to live, now and in the future. Question 2 was posed in an open-ended manner, allowing residents to mention any aspect or attribute 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 4 on the next page.

Among the specific changes desired, providing more affordable housing/workforce housing was the most common, mentioned by approximately 21% of voters surveyed, followed by reducing traffic congestion (15%), limiting growth and development (12%), and reducing the cost of living (11%). Approximately 8% of respondents could not think of a change to Truckee that they desired (7%), or indicated that no changes are needed (1%).

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

**FIGURE 4 CHANGES TO IMPROVE TOWN**

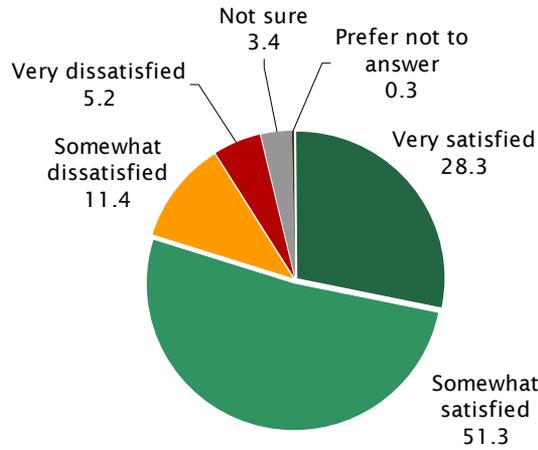


**OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING** The final question in this series asked respondents to indicate if, overall, they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the Town of Truckee is doing to provide town services. Because this question does not reference a specific program, facility, or service and requested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

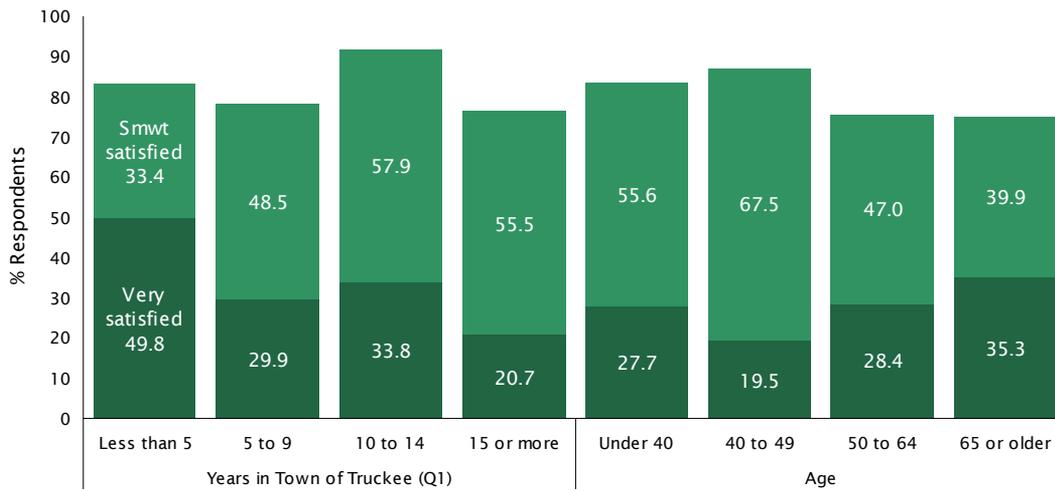
As shown in Figure 5 on the next page, eight-in-ten voters surveyed indicated that they were satisfied with the Town of Truckee’s efforts to provide municipal services, with 28% saying they were very satisfied and 51% somewhat satisfied. Approximately 17% reported that they were dissatisfied with the Town’s overall performance, whereas 4% were unsure or unwilling to state their opinion. For the interested reader, figures 6 and 7 display how the percentage of respondents satisfied with the Town’s overall performance in providing municipal services varied across demographic subgroups. It is striking that at least seven-in-ten voters within *every* identified subgroup were satisfied with the Town’s performance in providing municipal services.

**Question 4** Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the Town of Truckee is doing to provide town services?

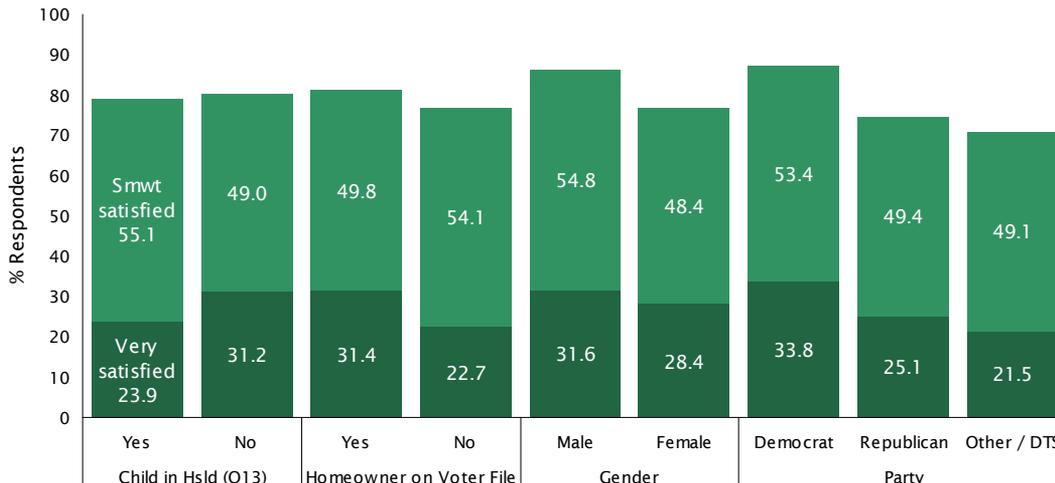
**FIGURE 5 OVERALL SATISFACTION**



**FIGURE 6 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY YEARS IN TOWN OF TRUCKEE & AGE**



**FIGURE 7 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY CHILD IN HSLD, HOMEOWNER ON VOTER FILE, GENDER & PARTY**



## INITIAL BALLOT TEST

The primary research objective of this survey was to estimate voters' support for establishing a one-half percent sales tax to protect essential town services such as providing local transit, neighborhood shuttles, and TART Connect; reducing traffic congestion; protecting open space and the environment; creating local workforce housing; and for general government use. To this end, Question 5 was designed to take an early assessment of voters' support for the proposed measure.

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

**Question 5** *Later this year, voters in Truckee may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure. Truckee Essential Services Measure. Shall the measure protecting essential Town services such as providing local transit, neighborhood shuttles, and TART Connect; reducing traffic congestion; protecting open space and the environment; creating local workforce housing; and for general government use by establishing a ½% sales tax, providing approximately \$3,500,000 annually until ended by voters, with independent audits and all funds staying local for Truckee, be adopted? Sample A: Listed supporters of the measure are local environmentalists, transit advocates, and Truckee councilmembers. Listed opponents: none submitted. Sample B: Listed supporters of the measure are local environmentalists, transit advocates, and Truckee councilmembers. Listed opponents of the measure are a taxpayer association and local business owner. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 8 INITIAL BALLOT TEST

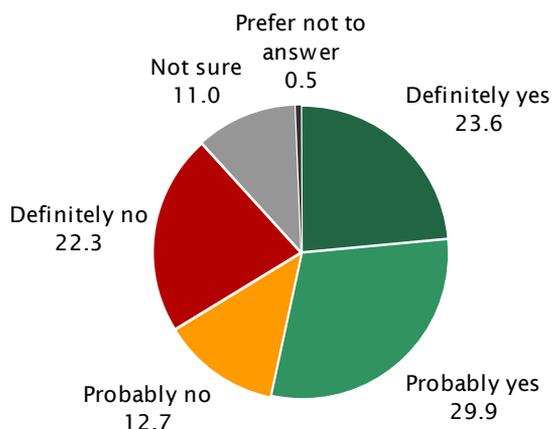
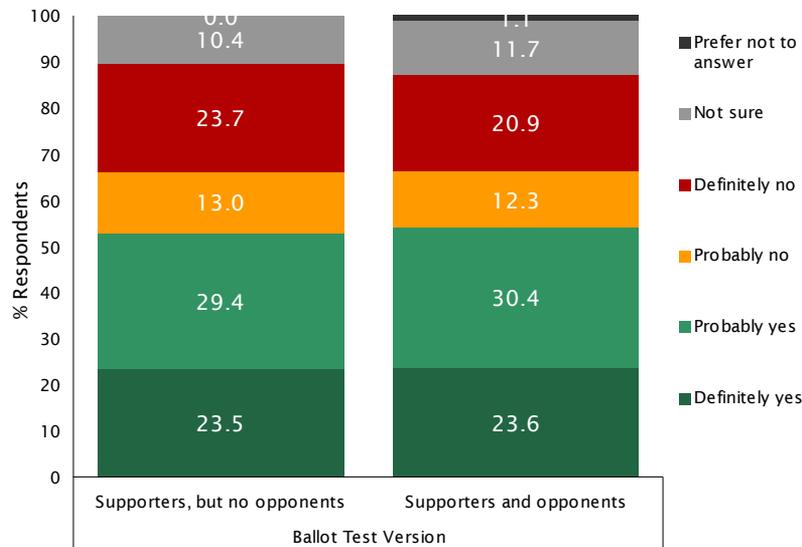


Figure 8 presents the results of the Initial Ballot Test among all respondents. Overall, 54% of likely November 2024 voters surveyed indicated that they would support the proposed one-half percent sales tax, whereas 35% stated that they would oppose the measure and approximately 12% were unsure or unwilling to share their vote choice. For general taxes in California, the level of support recorded at the Initial Ballot Test is approximately 4 percentage points above the simple majority (50%+1) required for passage.

**GAUGING AB1416 IMPACTS** For counties that choose not to opt-out of the practice, new legislation allows for a short list of supporters and opponents to appear right below the 75 word ballot statement. Not knowing at this point exactly which individuals or organizations may choose to support or oppose the proposal, if any, the survey employed a split-sample to gauge the potential impact of AB1416 on voter support for the proposed tax measure. The overall sample was divided into two representative subgroups. One group (Sample A) received the ballot statement with a short list of potential supporters (local environmentalists, transit advocates, and Truckee councilmembers) and no opponents listed, whereas the second group (Sample B) received the ballot statement followed by the same list of potential supporters and potential opponents described as a taxpayer association and local business owner.

Figure 9 shows that the two samples displayed similar levels of support at the Initial Ballot Test, with just 1% separating the subgroups. That said, True North has found that the percentage of voters who reply unsure/prefer not to answer at the Initial Ballot Test is often *higher* when supporters and/or opponents are listed when compared to voters receiving just the 75 word ballot statement. In Truckee, the percentage unwilling to state their opinion did not seem to be affected, but the percentage *unsure* was a bit higher than the level typically found when only the 75 word ballot statement is presented.

**FIGURE 9 INITIAL BALLOT TEST BY BALLOT TEST VERSION**



**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. Initial support for the proposed sales tax measure varied substantially across voter subgroups, with the largest differences found according to respondents' opinions of the Town's fiscal management, their satisfaction with the job the Town is doing to provide municipal services, length of residence, and partisanship.

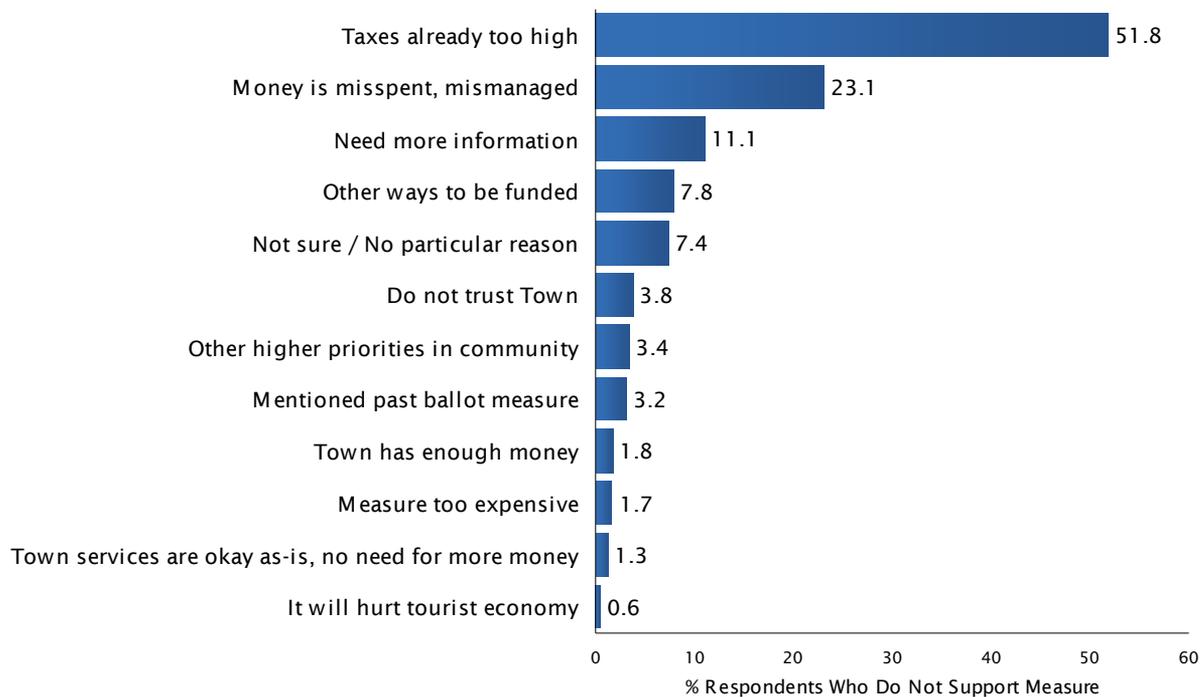
**TABLE 1 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST**

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	% Not sure
Overall		100.0	53.5	11.0
Years in Town of Truckee (Q1)	Less than 5	15.2	64.1	7.5
	5 to 9	16.3	59.5	15.2
	10 to 14	13.1	37.3	17.8
	15 or more	55.4	52.6	9.2
Fiscal Management Rating (Q12)	Excellent, good	38.6	78.6	11.1
	Fair	29.5	41.7	13.7
	Poor, very poor	13.2	5.6	2.3
	Not sure	18.7	56.1	12.5
Age	Under 40	26.6	57.8	11.2
	40 to 49	18.8	43.6	13.1
	50 to 64	28.6	57.6	6.4
	65 or older	25.9	51.6	14.5
Household Party Type	Single dem	29.3	63.6	12.1
	Dual dem	13.2	62.4	15.0
	Single, Dual rep	12.9	34.8	8.4
	Other	25.2	42.0	10.2
	Mixed	19.4	59.4	9.6
Party	Democrat	50.5	64.7	12.3
	Republican	17.4	40.0	7.5
	Other / DTS	32.1	43.1	11.0
Overall Satisfaction (Q4)	Satisfied	82.7	59.3	11.4
	Dissatisfied	17.3	26.3	10.5
Child in Hsld (Q13)	Yes	34.7	47.6	11.9
	No	65.3	57.3	10.8
Ridden TART-Connect, Shuttles, Transit in Past	Yes	50.7	62.3	10.1
	No	49.3	45.5	12.2
Registration Year	Since June 2012	26.1	56.0	8.9
	Before June 2012	73.9	52.6	11.8
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	64.5	51.4	12.7
	No	35.5	57.2	8.1
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	91.0	54.4	11.2
	No	9.0	44.1	9.4
Voting Propensity	High	74.1	57.2	11.0
	Medium / Low	25.9	42.7	11.2
Ballot Test Version	Supporters, but no opponents	50.0	52.9	10.4
	Supporters and opponents	50.0	54.0	11.7
Gender	Male	49.3	56.6	11.7
	Female	50.7	55.1	9.5

**REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING MEASURE** Respondents who did not support the measure or were unsure at the Initial Ballot Test were subsequently asked if there was a particular reason for their position. Question 6 was asked in an open-ended manner, allowing respondents to mention any reason that came to mind without being prompted by or restricted to a particular list of options. True North later reviewed the verbatim responses and grouped them into the categories shown in Figure 10. Among the *specific* reasons offered for not supporting the measure, the concern that taxes are already too high was by far the most common at 52%, followed by a belief that money is/will be mismanaged or misspent (23%), a need for more information (11%), and a perception that town services could be funded in other ways (8%).

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

**FIGURE 10 REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING MEASURE**



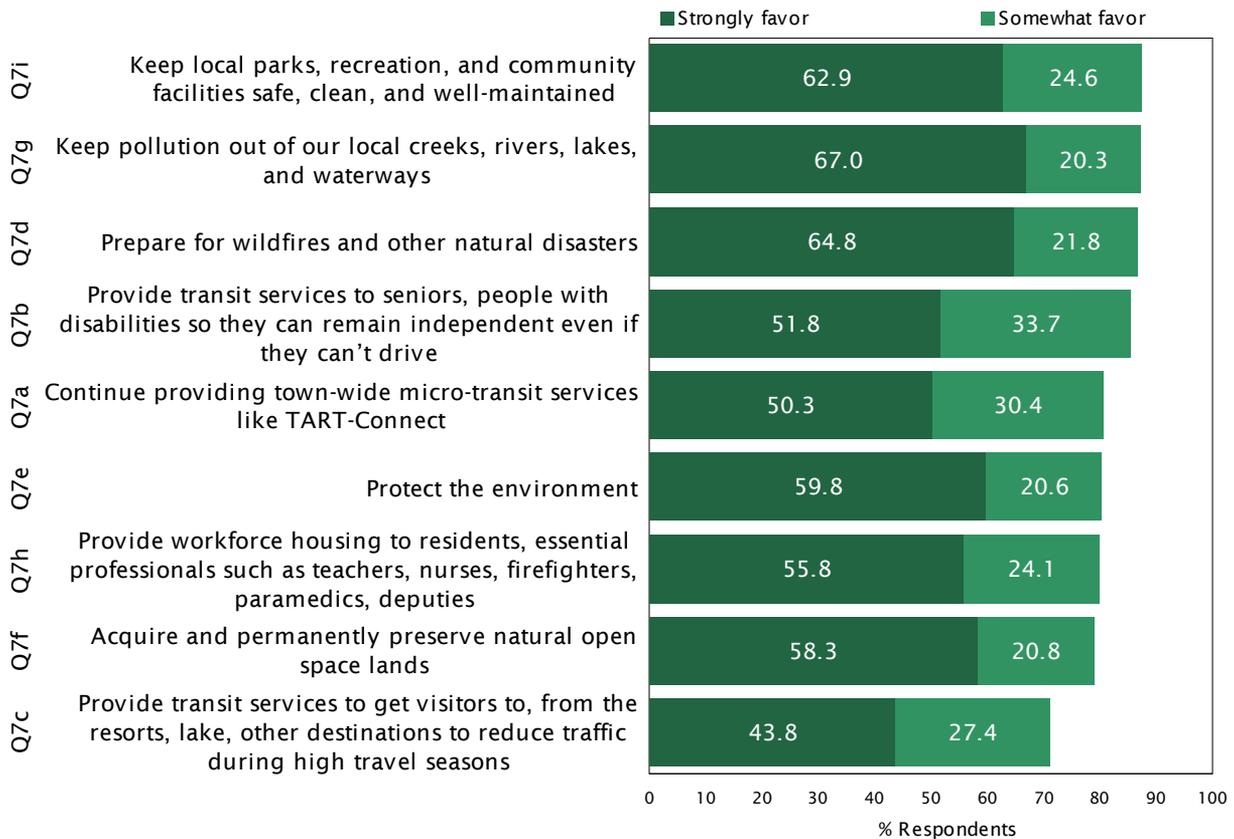
## PROJECTS & SERVICES

The ballot language presented in Question 5 indicated that the proposed sales tax measure would be used to protect essential town services such as providing local transit, neighborhood shuttles, and TART Connect; reducing traffic congestion; protecting open space and the environment; creating local workforce housing; and for general government use. The purpose of Question 7 was to provide respondents with a full range of projects and services that may be funded by the measure, and to identify which of these projects voters most favored funding with sales tax proceeds.

After reading each project or service that may be funded by the measure, respondents were asked if they would favor or oppose spending some of the money on that particular item assuming that the measure passes. Descriptions of the projects tested, as well as voters' responses, are shown in Figure 11 below.<sup>3</sup>

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

FIGURE 11 PROJECTS & SERVICES



3. For the full text of the services tested, turn to Question 7 in *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 32.

All projects and services tested were popular with Truckee voters, with at least seven-in-ten respondents indicating they would favor spending measure proceeds on each of the nine items tested. That said, the services that resonated with the *largest* percentage of respondents were keeping local parks, recreation, and community facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained (88% strongly or somewhat favor), keeping pollution out of local creeks, rivers, lakes, and waterways (87%), preparing for wildfires and other natural disasters (87%), and providing transit services to seniors and people with disabilities so they can remain independent even if they can't drive (86%).

**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 or those unsure. Nevertheless, initial supporters, opponents, and the undecided did agree on three of the top five priorities for funding.

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

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Item	Project/Service Summary	% Strongly Favor
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 216)	Q7d	Prepare for wildfires and other natural disasters	81
	Q7g	Keep pollution out of our local creeks, rivers, lakes, and waterways	81
	Q7i	Keep local parks, recreation, and community facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained	76
	Q7e	Protect the environment	76
	Q7h	Provide workforce housing to residents and essential professionals such as teachers, nurses, firefighters, paramedics, and deputies	72
Probably or Definitely No (n = 141)	Q7g	Keep pollution out of our local creeks, rivers, lakes, and waterways	48
	Q7i	Keep local parks, recreation, and community facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained	43
	Q7f	Acquire and permanently preserve natural open space lands	42
	Q7d	Prepare for wildfires and other natural disasters	40
	Q7b	Provide transit services to seniors and people with disabilities so they can remain independent even if they can't drive	36
Not Sure (n = 45)	Q7f	Acquire and permanently preserve natural open space lands	69
	Q7d	Prepare for wildfires and other natural disasters	63
	Q7i	Keep local parks, recreation, and community facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained	61
	Q7g	Keep pollution out of our local creeks, rivers, lakes, and waterways	60
	Q7e	Protect the environment	59

## POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

If the Town chooses to place the sales tax 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 the 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 measure, it is important that the survey simulate the type of discussion and debate that will occur prior to the vote taking place and identify how this information ultimately shapes voters' opinions about the measure.

The objective of Question 8 was thus to present respondents with arguments in favor of the proposed measure and identify whether they felt the arguments were convincing reasons to support the measure. 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 12 POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

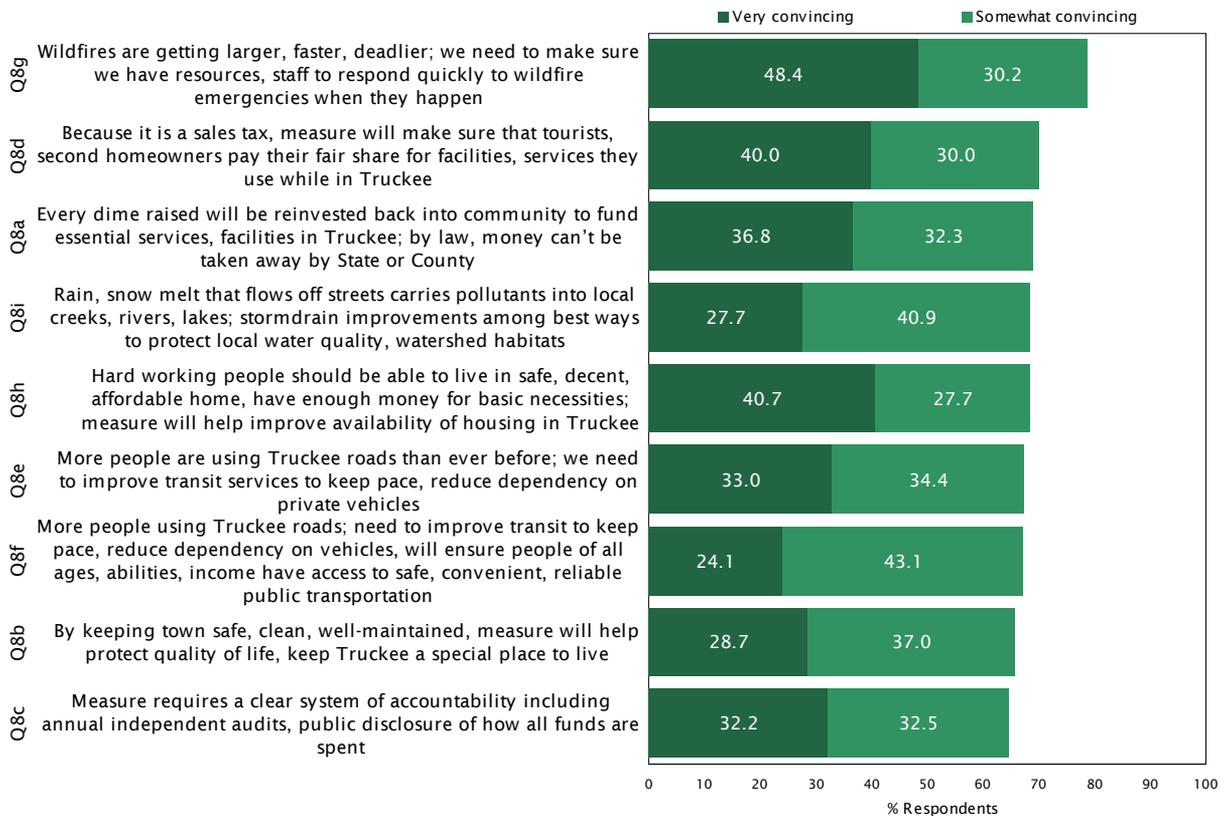


Figure 12 presents the truncated positive arguments tested, as well as voters' reactions to the arguments. The arguments are sorted from most convincing to least convincing based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that the argument was either a 'very convincing' or 'somewhat convincing' reason to support the measure. Using this methodology, the most compelling positive argument was *Wildfires are getting larger, faster, and deadlier. We need to make sure we have the resources and staff to respond quickly to wildfire emergencies when they happen* (79% very or somewhat convincing), followed by *Because it is a sales tax, this measure will make sure that tourists and second homeowners pay their fair share for the facilities and services they use while in Truckee* (70%) and *Every dime raised by the measure will be reinvested back into the community to fund essential services and facilities here in Truckee. By law, the money can't be taken away by the State or County* (69%).

**TOP 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 most striking pattern in the table is that the positive arguments resonated with a much higher percentage of voters who were initially inclined to support the measure when compared to voters who initially opposed the measure or were unsure. Nevertheless, two specific arguments were ranked among the top five most compelling by supporters, opponents, and the undecided.

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

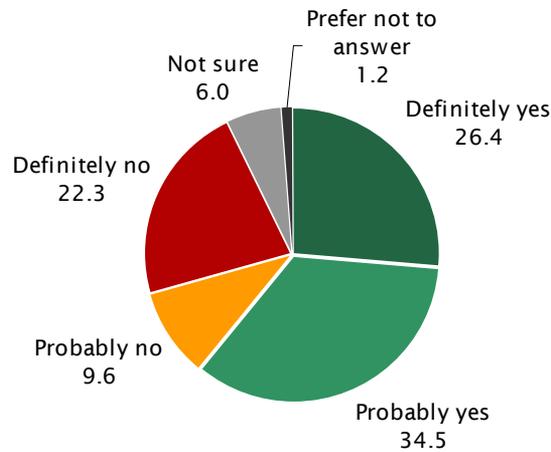
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Item	Positive Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 216)	Q8g	Wildfires are getting larger, faster, deadlier; we need to make sure we have resources, staff to respond quickly to wildfire emergencies when they happen	66
	Q8d	Because it is a sales tax, measure will make sure that tourists, second homeowners pay their fair share for facilities, services they use while in Truckee	61
	Q8h	Hard working people should be able to live in safe, decent, affordable home, have enough money for basic necessities; measure will help improve availability of housing in Truckee	54
	Q8a	Every dime raised will be reinvested back into community to fund essential services, facilities in Truckee; by law, money can't be taken away by State or County	53
	Q8e	More people are using Truckee roads than ever before; we need to improve transit services to keep pace, reduce dependency on private vehicles	46
Probably or Definitely No (n = 141)	Q8g	Wildfires are getting larger, faster, deadlier; we need to make sure we have resources, staff to respond quickly to wildfire emergencies when they happen	26
	Q8h	Hard working people should be able to live in safe, decent, affordable home, have enough money for basic necessities; measure will help improve availability of housing in Truckee	24
	Q8e	More people are using Truckee roads than ever before; we need to improve transit services to keep pace, reduce dependency on private vehicles	18
	Q8b	By keeping town safe, clean, well-maintained, measure will help protect quality of life, keep Truckee a special place to live	15
	Q8d	Because it is a sales tax, measure will make sure that tourists, second homeowners pay their fair share for facilities, services they use while in Truckee	15
Not Sure (n = 45)	Q8a	Every dime raised will be reinvested back into community to fund essential services, facilities in Truckee; by law, money can't be taken away by State or County	37
	Q8g	Wildfires are getting larger, faster, deadlier; we need to make sure we have resources, staff to respond quickly to wildfire emergencies when they happen	32
	Q8h	Hard working people should be able to live in safe, decent, affordable home, have enough money for basic necessities; measure will help improve availability of housing in Truckee	30
	Q8c	Measure requires a clear system of accountability including annual independent audits, public disclosure of how all funds are spent	28
	Q8b	By keeping town safe, clean, well-maintained, measure will help protect quality of life, keep Truckee a special place to live	26

## 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 13, overall support among likely November 2024 voters increased to 61%, with 26% of voters indicating that they would *definitely* vote yes on the measure. Approximately 32% of respondents opposed the measure at this point in the survey, and an additional 7% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

**Question 9** *Sometimes people change their mind about a measure once they have more information about it. Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it again. Truckee Essential Services Measure. Shall the measure protecting essential Town services such as providing local transit, neighborhood shuttles, and TART Connect; reducing traffic congestion; protecting open space and the environment; creating local workforce housing; and for general government use by establishing a ½% sales tax, providing approximately \$3,500,000 annually until ended by voters, with independent audits and all funds staying local for Truckee, be adopted? Sample A: Listed supporters of the measure are local environmentalists, transit advocates, and Truckee councilmembers. Listed opponents: none submitted. Sample B: Listed supporters of the measure are local environmentalists, transit advocates, and Truckee councilmembers. Listed opponents of the measure are a taxpayer association and local business owner. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 13 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 demographic subgroups, as well as the percentage 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 increased between the Initial and Interim Ballot Test for *all* voter subgroups. The largest net increases in support for the measure were found among Republican households (+22%) and voters who have lived in Truckee between 10 and 14 years (+18%).

TABLE 4 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INTERIM BALLOT TEST

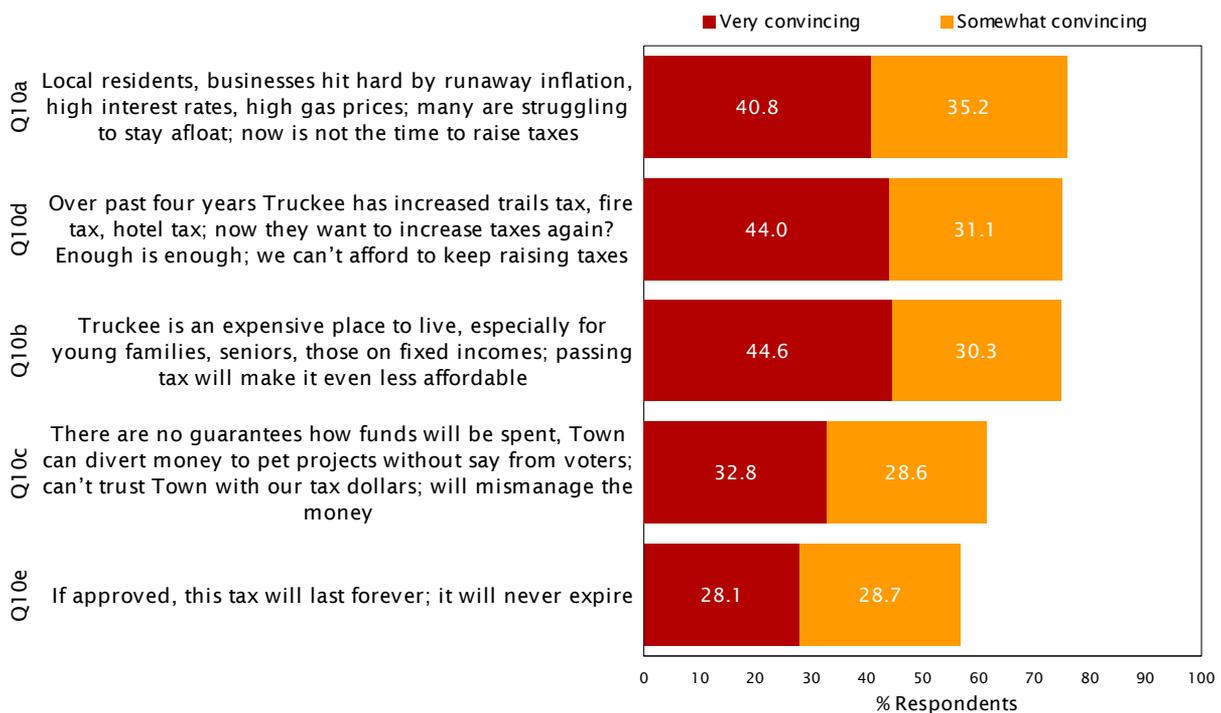
		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q5)
Overall		100.0	60.9	+7.4
Years in Town of Truckee (Q1)	Less than 5	15.2	70.5	+6.4
	5 to 9	16.3	66.4	+7.0
	10 to 14	13.1	54.9	+17.6
	15 or more	55.4	58.1	+5.5
Fiscal Management Rating (Q12)	Excellent, good	38.6	83.1	+4.5
	Fair	29.5	48.5	+6.9
	Poor, very poor	13.2	22.3	+16.6
	Not sure	18.7	64.4	+8.3
Age	Under 40	26.6	64.9	+7.1
	40 to 49	18.8	48.2	+4.6
	50 to 64	28.6	62.4	+4.8
	65 or older	25.9	64.4	+12.8
Household Party Type	Single dem	29.3	66.6	+3.1
	Dual dem	13.2	73.5	+11.2
	Single, Dual rep	12.9	56.6	+21.8
	Other	25.2	49.0	+6.9
	Mixed	19.4	62.0	+2.6
Party	Democrat	50.5	70.2	+5.5
	Republican	17.4	57.5	+17.4
	Other / DTS	32.1	48.1	+5.0
Overall Satisfaction (Q4)	Satisfied	82.7	66.5	+7.1
	Dissatisfied	17.3	36.9	+10.6
Child in Hsld (Q13)	Yes	34.7	54.2	+6.5
	No	65.3	65.4	+8.1
Ridden TART-Connect, Shuttles, Transit in Past	Yes	50.7	66.6	+4.3
	No	49.3	56.3	+10.8
Registration Year	Since June 2012	26.1	66.7	+10.6
	Before June 2012	73.9	58.9	+6.3
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	64.5	59.8	+8.3
	No	35.5	63.0	+5.8
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	91.0	60.9	+6.5
	No	9.0	61.1	+17.0
Voting Propensity	High	74.1	64.0	+6.8
	Medium / Low	25.9	52.0	+9.3
Ballot Test Version	Supporters, but no opponents	50.0	59.4	+6.5
	Supporters and opponents	50.0	62.4	+8.4
Gender	Male	49.3	67.3	+10.7
	Female	50.7	60.3	+5.1

## NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

Whereas Question 8 presented respondents with arguments in favor of the measure, Question 10 presented respondents with arguments designed to elicit opposition to the measure. In the case of Question 10, however, respondents were asked if they felt that the argument was a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to *oppose* the measure. The arguments tested, as well as voters’ opinions about the arguments, are presented in Figure 14.

**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 14 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS



Among the negative arguments tested, the most compelling were: *Local residents and businesses have been hit hard by runaway inflation, high interest rates, and high gas prices. Many are struggling to stay afloat. Now is not the time to raise taxes* (76% very or somewhat convincing), *Over the past four years Truckee has increased the trails tax, increased the fire tax, and increased the hotel tax. Now they want to increase taxes again? Enough is enough. We can't afford to keep raising our taxes* (75%), and *Truckee 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* (75%).

**TOP NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS BY INITIAL SUPPORT** Table 5 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**

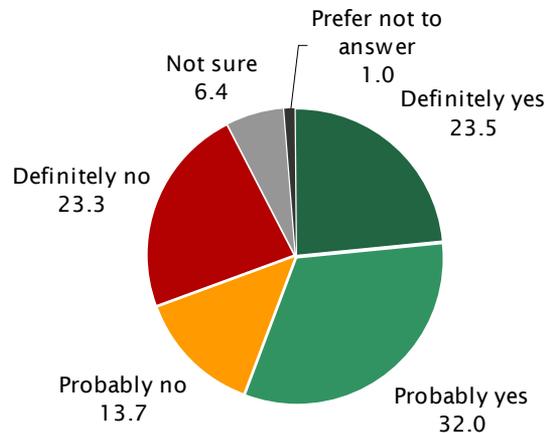
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Item	Negative Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 216)	Q10d	Over past four years Truckee has increased trails tax, fire tax, hotel tax; now they want to increase taxes again? Enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	30
	Q10b	Truckee is an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed incomes; passing tax will make it even less affordable	29
	Q10a	Local residents, businesses hit hard by runaway inflation, high interest rates, high gas prices; many are struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to raise taxes	24
	Q10c	There are no guarantees how funds will be spent, Town can divert money to pet projects without say from voters; can't trust Town with our tax dollars; will mismanage the money	23
	Q10e	If approved, this tax will last forever; it will never expire	13
Probably or Definitely No (n = 141)	Q10d	Over past four years Truckee has increased trails tax, fire tax, hotel tax; now they want to increase taxes again? Enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	71
	Q10b	Truckee is an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed incomes; passing tax will make it even less affordable	70
	Q10a	Local residents, businesses hit hard by runaway inflation, high interest rates, high gas prices; many are struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to raise taxes	66
	Q10c	There are no guarantees how funds will be spent, Town can divert money to pet projects without say from voters; can't trust Town with our tax dollars; will mismanage the money	55
	Q10e	If approved, this tax will last forever; it will never expire	54
Not Sure (n = 45)	Q10a	Local residents, businesses hit hard by runaway inflation, high interest rates, high gas prices; many are struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to raise taxes	47
	Q10b	Truckee is an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed incomes; passing tax will make it even less affordable	39
	Q10e	If approved, this tax will last forever; it will never expire	32
	Q10d	Over past four years Truckee has increased trails tax, fire tax, hotel tax; now they want to increase taxes again? Enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	31
	Q10c	There are no guarantees how funds will be spent, Town can divert money to pet projects without say from voters; can't trust Town with our tax dollars; will mismanage the money	15

## FINAL BALLOT TEST

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

**Question 11** *Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it one more time. Truckee Essential Services Measure. Shall the measure protecting essential Town services such as providing local transit, neighborhood shuttles, and TART Connect; reducing traffic congestion; protecting open space and the environment; creating local workforce housing; and for general government use by establishing a ½% sales tax, providing approximately \$3,500,000 annually until ended by voters, with independent audits and all funds staying local for Truckee, be adopted? Sample A: Listed supporters of the measure are local environmentalists, transit advocates, and Truckee councilmembers. Listed opponents: none submitted. Sample B: Listed supporters of the measure are local environmentalists, transit advocates, and Truckee councilmembers. Listed opponents of the measure are a taxpayer association and local business owner. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 15 FINAL BALLOT TEST



At this point in the survey, support for the measure was found among 56% of likely November 2024 voters surveyed, with 24% indicating they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 37% of respondents opposed the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 7% 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 survey by calculating the difference in support between the Initial, Interim, and Final Ballot Tests within subgroups of voters. The percentage of support for the measure at the Final Ballot Test is shown in the column with the heading *% Probably or Definitely Yes*. The columns to the right show the difference between the Final and the Initial, and the Final and Interim Ballot Tests. Positive differences appear in green, and negative differences appear in red.

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

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Change From Interim Ballot Test (Q9)
Overall		100.0	55.6	+2.1	-5.3
Years in Town of Truckee (Q1)	Less than 5	15.2	67.9	+3.8	-2.6
	5 to 9	16.3	65.7	+6.2	-0.7
	10 to 14	13.1	51.7	+14.4	-3.2
	15 or more	55.4	50.1	-2.5	-8.0
Fiscal Management Rating (Q12)	Excellent, good	38.6	82.3	+3.7	-0.8
	Fair	29.5	42.0	+0.4	-6.5
	Poor, very poor	13.2	14.9	+9.2	-7.4
	Not sure	18.7	52.7	-3.4	-11.7
Age	Under 40	26.6	56.8	-1.0	-8.1
	40 to 49	18.8	42.2	-1.4	-6.0
	50 to 64	28.6	58.0	+0.4	-4.4
	65 or older	25.9	61.2	+9.6	-3.1
Household Party Type	Single dem	29.3	62.1	-1.4	-4.5
	Dual dem	13.2	72.0	+9.6	-1.5
	Single, Dual rep	12.9	53.2	+18.3	-3.4
	Other	25.2	42.1	+0.0	-6.9
	Mixed	19.4	53.6	-5.8	-8.4
Party	Democrat	50.5	64.1	-0.5	-6.1
	Republican	17.4	53.2	+13.1	-4.3
	Other / DTS	32.1	43.4	+0.3	-4.7
Overall Satisfaction (Q4)	Satisfied	82.7	61.4	+2.1	-5.1
	Dissatisfied	17.3	29.0	+2.6	-7.9
Child in Hsld (Q13)	Yes	34.7	47.1	-0.5	-7.0
	No	65.3	60.8	+3.5	-4.5
Ridden TART-Connect, Shuttles, Transit in Past	Yes	50.7	62.5	+0.2	-4.0
	No	49.3	49.5	+4.0	-6.8
Registration Year	Since June 2012	26.1	56.7	+0.7	-10.0
	Before June 2012	73.9	55.2	+2.6	-3.7
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	64.5	56.7	+5.3	-3.0
	No	35.5	53.4	-3.8	-9.6
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	91.0	55.5	+1.1	-5.4
	No	9.0	56.6	+12.5	-4.5
Voting Propensity	High	74.1	61.1	+3.8	-3.0
	Medium / Low	25.9	39.9	-2.8	-12.1
Ballot Test Version	Supporters, but no opponents	50.0	54.7	+1.8	-4.7
	Supporters and opponents	50.0	56.4	+2.4	-6.0
Gender	Male	49.3	58.2	+1.6	-9.1
	Female	50.7	58.6	+3.5	-1.6

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), however, was one of increasing support for most voter subgroups, averaging +2% overall. With this increase, support for the proposed sales tax measure at the Final Ballot Test (56%) remained 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 23.6% of respondents who indicated that they would definitely support the measure at the Initial Ballot Test, 18.5% also indicated they would definitely support the measure at the Final Ballot Test. Approximately 4.7% moved to the probably support group, 0.2% moved to the probably oppose group, 0.0% moved to the definitely oppose group, and 0.2% stated they were now unsure of their vote choice.

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

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

Initial Ballot Test (Q5)		Final Ballot Test (Q11)				
		Definitely support	Probably support	Probably oppose	Definitely oppose	Not sure
Definitely support	23.6%	18.5%	4.7%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
Probably support	29.9%	4.1%	21.0%	2.1%	0.2%	2.5%
Probably oppose	12.7%	0.0%	2.1%	8.4%	1.5%	0.7%
Definitely oppose	22.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	20.0%	0.4%
Not sure	11.6%	0.9%	4.2%	1.2%	1.5%	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 nearly equal percentage found the same information to be a reason to be less supportive. Despite 16% 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 (56%) was just two percentage points different than support at the Initial Ballot Test (54%).

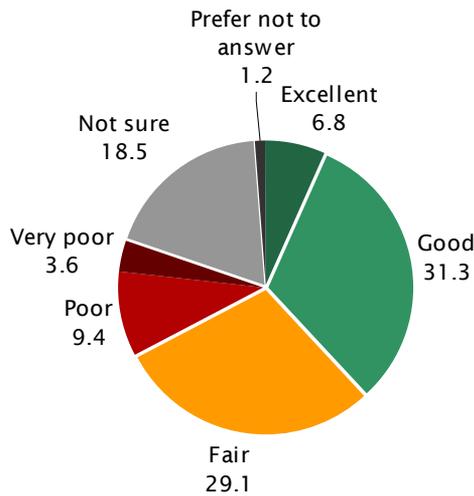
4. This is, they changed from a position of support, opposition, or undecided at the Initial Ballot Test to a different position at the Final Ballot Test.

## FISCAL MANAGEMENT

After gauging support for the proposed sales tax measure, the survey turned to assessing voters' opinions about the Town's performance in managing its financial resources. Approximately two-thirds (67%) of respondents gave the Town a positive or neutral rating, with 7% rating the Town's performance as excellent, 31% good, and 29% fair. Approximately 13% rated the job the Town has done in managing its finances as poor or very poor, whereas one-in-five (20%) confided they were not sure or preferred not to answer the question (Figure 16).

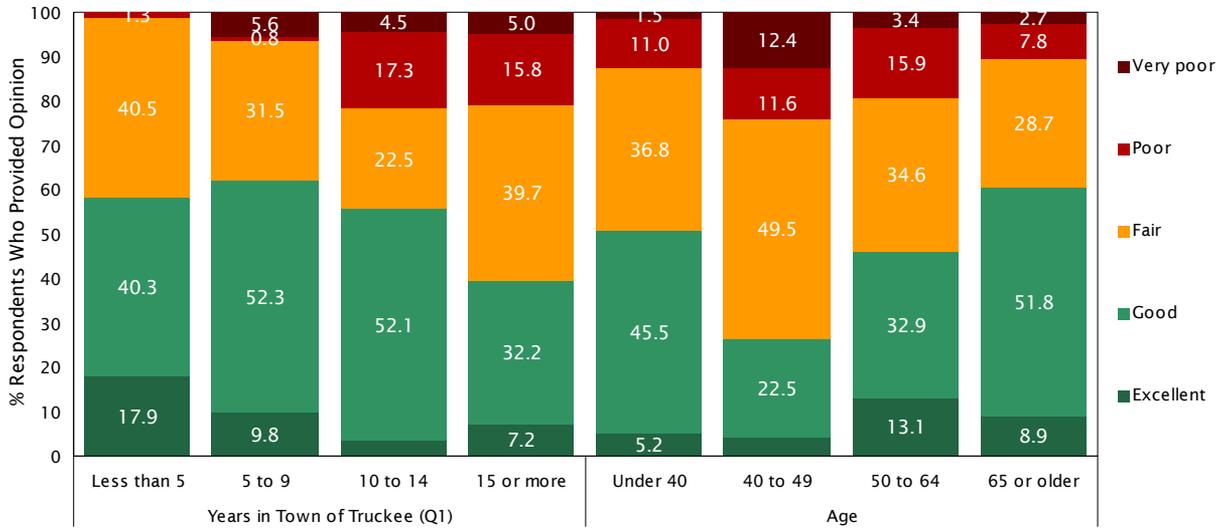
**Question 12** *In your opinion, has the Town of Truckee done an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job of managing its financial resources?*

**FIGURE 16 RATING FISCAL MANAGEMENT**

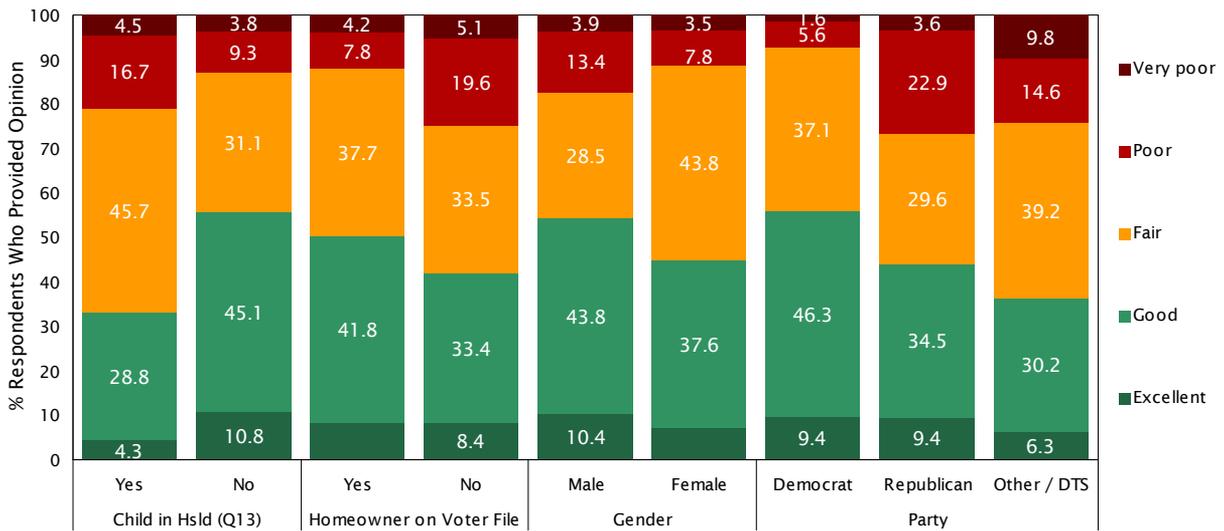


For the interested reader, figures 17 and 18 on the next page show how fiscal management ratings varied (among those with an opinion) by length of residence, age of the respondent, presence of a child in the home, homeownership status, gender, and partisanship.

**FIGURE 17 RATING FISCAL MANAGEMENT BY YEARS IN TOWN OF TRUCKEE & AGE**



**FIGURE 18 RATING FISCAL MANAGEMENT BY CHILD IN HSLD, HOMEOWNER ON VOTER FILE, GENDER & PARTY**



## BACKGROUND & DEMOGRAPHICS

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.

**TABLE 8 DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE**

<i>Total Respondents</i>	404
<b>Years in Town of Truckee (Q1)</b>	
Less than 5	15.2
5 to 9	16.3
10 to 14	13.1
15 or more	55.4
<b>Fiscal Management Rating (Q12)</b>	
Excellent, good	38.1
Fair	29.1
Poor, very poor	13.0
Not sure	18.5
Prefer not to answer	1.2
<b>Child in Hsld (Q13)</b>	
Yes	34.3
No	64.5
Prefer not to answer	1.2
<b>Ridden TART-Connect, Shuttles, Transit in Past 12 Mos (Q14)</b>	
Yes	50.2
No	48.8
Prefer not to answer	1.0
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	46.6
Female	47.9
Non-binary	0.6
Prefer not to answer	4.8
<b>Party</b>	
Democrat	50.5
Republican	17.4
Other / DTS	32.1
<b>Age</b>	
Under 40	26.6
40 to 49	18.8
50 to 64	28.6
65 or older	25.9
<b>Registration Year</b>	
Since June 2012	26.1
Before June 2012	73.9
<b>Household Party Type</b>	
Single dem	29.3
Dual dem	13.2
Single, Dual rep	12.9
Other	25.2
Mixed	19.4
<b>Homeowner on Voter File</b>	
Yes	64.5
No	35.5
<b>Likely to Vote by Mail</b>	
Yes	91.0
No	9.0
<b>Voting Propensity</b>	
High	74.1
Medium / Low	25.9
<b>Ballot Test Version</b>	
Supporters, but no opponents	50.0
Supporters and opponents	50.0



## 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 Town of Truckee 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 of the questions asked in this study were presented only to a subset of respondents. For example, only individuals who did not support the sales tax or were unsure at the Initial Ballot Test (Question 5) were asked if there was a particular reason they did not support or were unsure about the measure (Question 6). The questionnaire included with this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 32) identifies the skip patterns that were used during the interview to ensure that each respondent received the appropriate questions.

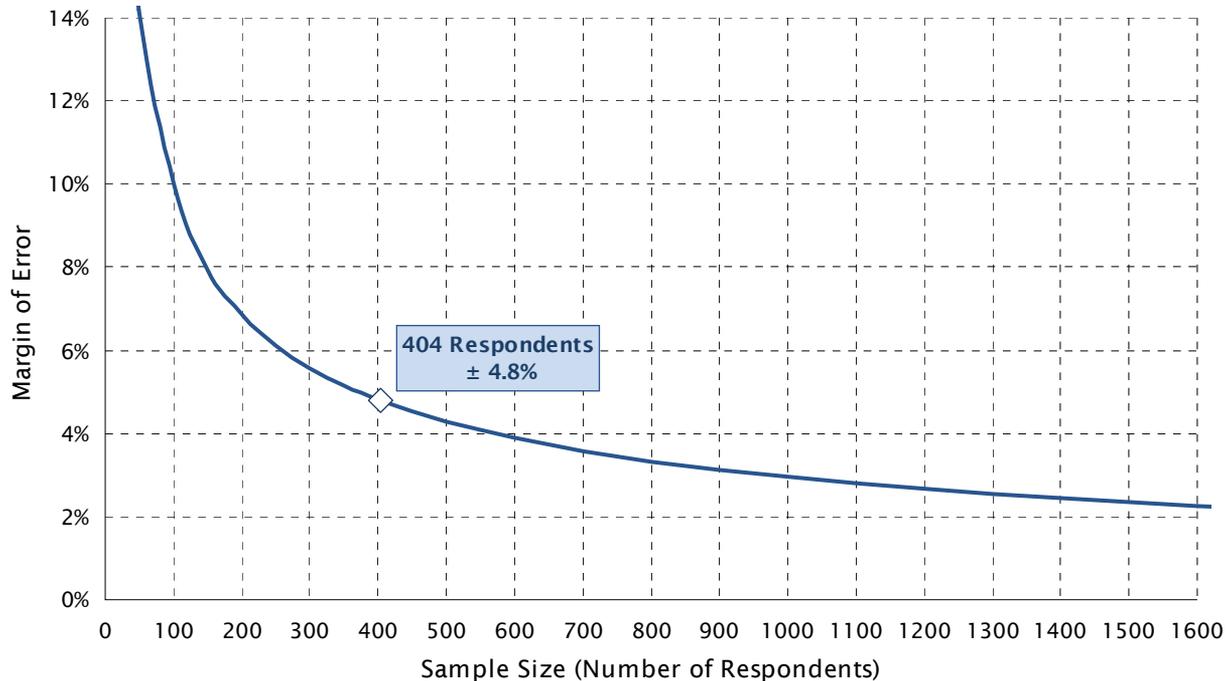
**PROGRAMMING & PRE-TEST** Prior to fielding the survey, the questionnaire was CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) programmed to assist interviewers when conducting telephone interviews. The CATI program automatically navigates skip patterns, randomizes the appropriate question items, and 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 Town prior to formally beginning the survey.

**SAMPLE** The survey was administered to a stratified and clustered random sample of registered voters in the Town of Truckee who are likely to participate in the November 2024 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 in the study, they are replaced by an individual who shares their same profile.

**STATISTICAL MARGIN OF ERROR** By using the probability-based sampling design noted above, True North ensured that the final sample was representative of voters in the Town who are likely to participate in the November 2024 election. The results of the sample can thus be used to estimate the opinions of *all* voters likely to participate in the November 2024 election. Because not all voters participated in the survey, 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 404 voters for a particular question and what would have been found if all estimated 10,506 likely November 2024 voters in Truckee had been surveyed.

Figure 19 provides a graphic plot of the *maximum* margin of error in this study. The maximum margin of error for a dichotomous percentage result occurs when the answers are evenly split such that 50% provide one response and 50% provide the alternative response. For this survey, the maximum margin of error is  $\pm 4.8\%$  at the 95% confidence level.

**FIGURE 19 MAXIMUM MARGIN OF ERROR DUE TO SAMPLING**



Within this report, figures and tables show how responses to certain questions varied by subgroups such as age, gender, and partisan affiliation. Figure 19 is thus useful for understanding how the maximum margin of error for a percentage estimate will grow as the number of individuals asked a question (or in a particular subgroup) shrinks. Because the margin of error grows exponentially as the sample size decreases, the reader should use caution when generalizing and interpreting the results for small subgroups.

**RECRUITING & DATA COLLECTION** The survey followed a mixed-method design that employed multiple recruiting methods (email, text, and telephone) 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 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 404 surveys were completed between May 14 and May 21, 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



Town of Truckee  
 Baseline Sales Tax Feasibility Survey  
 Final Toplines (n=404)  
 May 2024

## Section 1: Introduction to Study

Hi, may I please speak to \_\_\_\_\_. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm calling from TNR on behalf of the Town of Truckee (Truh-kee). The Town is conducting a survey of voters about important issues and 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 & Town Services

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

Q1	How long have you lived in Truckee?		
	1	Less than 1 year	2%
	2	1 to 4 years	14%
	3	5 to 9 years	16%
	4	10 to 14 years	13%
	5	15 years or longer	55%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%
Q2	How would you rate the overall quality of life in Truckee? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?		
	1	Excellent	38%
	2	Good	49%
	3	Fair	10%
	4	Poor	2%
	5	Very poor	0%
	98	Not sure	0%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%

Q3	If the town government could change one thing to make Truckee 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.	
	Provide more affordable housing, local workforce housing	21%
	Reduce traffic congestion	15%
	Limit growth, development	12%
	Reduce cost of living	11%
	Not sure / Cannot think of anything specific	7%
	Improve, add public transportation	4%
	Provide more events, rec activities for all ages	4%
	Improve, repair roads, infrastructure	3%
	Improve variety of shopping, restaurants	3%
	Improve parking, reduce fees downtown	3%
	Address second-home, vacation rental issues	3%
	Reduce taxes, fees	3%
	Add, improve bike lanes and trails	3%
	Address homelessness	3%
	Improve emergency preparedness	2%
	Better development, town planning	2%
	Ease code, permit restrictions, reduce fees	2%
	Add, improve sidewalks, walking paths	2%
	Enforce traffic laws	2%
	Focus on community issues more than tourism	2%
	Improve government, leaders	2%
	Provide more medical services, hospital	2%
Q4	Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the Town of Truckee is doing to provide town services? <i>Get answer, then ask: Would that be very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?</i>	
	1 Very satisfied	28%
	2 Somewhat satisfied	51%
	3 Somewhat dissatisfied	11%
	4 Very dissatisfied	5%
	98 Not sure	3%
	99 Prefer not to answer	0%

Section 3: Initial Ballot Test					
<p>Later this year, voters in Truckee may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure.</p> <p style="color: red; text-align: center;"><i>Split Sample. Sample A receives 'Sample A' version of supporters/opponents. Sample B receives 'Sample B' version.</i></p>					
Q5	<p><b>Truckee Essential Services Measure.</b> Shall the measure protecting essential Town services such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing local transit, neighborhood shuttles, and TART Connect;</li> <li>○ Reducing traffic congestion;</li> <li>○ Protecting open space and the environment;</li> <li>○ Creating local workforce housing;</li> <li>○ and for general government use</li> </ul> <p>by establishing a ½% (one-half percent) sales tax, providing approximately \$3,500,000 (three and one-half million dollars) annually until ended by voters, with independent audits and all funds staying local for Truckee, be adopted?</p> <p><i>Sample A:</i> Listed <b>supporters</b> of the measure are local environmentalists, transit advocates, and Truckee councilmembers. Listed <b>opponents</b>: none submitted.</p> <p><i>Sample B:</i> Listed <b>supporters</b> of the measure are local environmentalists, transit advocates, and Truckee councilmembers. Listed <b>opponents</b> of the measure are a taxpayer association and local business owner.</p> <p>If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? <i>Get answer, then ask:</i> Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?</p>				
			Overall	Supporters, but no opponents	Supporters and opponents
1	Definitely yes	24%	23%	24%	Skip to Q7
2	Probably yes	30%	29%	30%	Skip to Q7
3	Probably no	13%	13%	12%	Ask Q6
4	Definitely no	22%	24%	21%	Ask Q6
98	Not sure	11%	10%	12%	Ask Q6
99	Prefer not to answer	1%	0%	1%	Skip to Q7
Q6	<p>Is there a particular reason why you do <b>not</b> support or are unsure about the measure I just described? <i>If yes, ask:</i> Please briefly describe your reason. <i>Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below.</i></p>				
	Taxes already too high			52%	
	Money is misspent, mismanaged			23%	
	Need more information			11%	
	Other ways to be funded			8%	
	Not sure / No particular reason			7%	
	Do not trust Town			4%	
	Other higher priorities in community			3%	

Mentioned past ballot measure	3%
Town has enough money	2%
Measure too expensive	2%
Town services are okay as-is, no need for more money	1%
It will hurt tourist economy	1%

**Section 4: Projects & Services**

Q7	The measure we've been discussing will provide funding for a variety of services in your community.						
	If the measure passes, would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: _____, or do you not have an opinion? <i>Get answer, if favor or oppose, then ask: Would that be strongly (favor/oppose) or somewhat (favor/oppose)?</i>						
	<i>Randomize</i>	Strongly favor	Somewhat favor	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Continue providing town-wide <b>micro-transit services</b> like TART-Connect	50%	30%	5%	8%	5%	2%
B	Provide transit services to <b>seniors</b> and <b>people with disabilities</b> so they can remain independent even if they can't drive	52%	34%	5%	4%	5%	1%
C	Provide transit services to get <b>visitors</b> to and from the resorts, lake, and other destinations to reduce traffic during high travel seasons	44%	27%	9%	12%	6%	2%
D	Prepare for wildfires and other natural disasters	65%	22%	2%	7%	3%	1%
E	Protect the environment	60%	21%	5%	8%	5%	2%
F	Acquire and permanently preserve natural open space lands	58%	21%	5%	9%	5%	2%
G	Keep pollution out of our local creeks, rivers, lakes, and waterways	67%	20%	3%	5%	3%	1%
H	Provide <b>workforce housing</b> to residents and essential professionals such as teachers, nurses, firefighters, paramedics, and deputies	56%	24%	8%	7%	4%	1%
I	Keep local parks, recreation, and community facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained	63%	25%	3%	4%	4%	1%

<b>Section 5: 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.							
Q8	Supporters of the measure say: ----- Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to <b>SUPPORT</b> the measure?						
	<i>Randomize</i>	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Not at all convincing	Don't believe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Every dime raised by the measure will be reinvested back into the community to fund essential services and facilities here in Truckee. By law, the money can't be taken away by the State or County.	37%	32%	16%	9%	4%	3%
B	By keeping our town safe, clean, and well-maintained, this measure will help protect our quality of life and keep Truckee a special place to live.	29%	37%	19%	9%	4%	3%
C	The measure requires a clear system of accountability including annual independent audits and public disclosure of how all funds are spent.	32%	32%	22%	10%	2%	2%
D	Because it is a sales tax, this measure will make sure that tourists and second homeowners pay their fair share for the facilities and services they use while in Truckee.	40%	30%	12%	14%	1%	2%
E	More people are using Truckee roads than ever before. We need to improve our transit services to keep pace and reduce the dependency on private vehicles	33%	34%	20%	8%	2%	2%
F	This measure will ensure that people of all ages, abilities and income will have access to safe, convenient, and reliable public transportation here in Truckee	24%	43%	18%	9%	3%	2%
G	Wildfires are getting larger, faster, and deadlier. We need to make sure we have the resources and staff to respond quickly to wildfire emergencies when they happen.	48%	30%	11%	6%	1%	3%
H	Hard working people should be able to live in a safe, decent, affordable home and still have enough money for other basic necessities. This measure will help improve the availability of housing in Truckee.	41%	28%	17%	10%	2%	2%

I	Rain and snow melt that flows off our streets carries pollutants directly into our local creeks, rivers, and lakes. The stormdrain improvements that can be funded by this measure are among the best ways to protect our local water quality and watershed habitats.	28%	41%	18%	6%	4%	3%
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**Section 6: Interim Ballot Test**

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

*Split Sample. Sample A receives 'Sample A' version of supporters/opponents. Sample B receives 'Sample B' version.*

Q9	<p><b>Truckee Essential Services Measure.</b> Shall the measure protecting essential Town services such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Providing local transit, neighborhood shuttles, and TART Connect;</li> <li>o Reducing traffic congestion;</li> <li>o Protecting open space and the environment;</li> <li>o Creating local workforce housing;</li> <li>o and for general government use</li> </ul> <p>by establishing a ½% (one-half percent) sales tax, providing approximately \$3,500,000 (three and one-half million dollars) annually until ended by voters, with independent audits and all funds staying local for Truckee, be adopted?</p> <p><i>Sample A:</i> Listed <b>supporters</b> of the measure are local environmentalists, transit advocates, and Truckee councilmembers. Listed <b>opponents</b>: none submitted.</p> <p><i>Sample B:</i> Listed <b>supporters</b> of the measure are local environmentalists, transit advocates, and Truckee councilmembers. Listed <b>opponents</b> of the measure are a taxpayer association and local business owner.</p> <p>If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? <i>Get answer, then ask:</i> Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?</p>			
		Overall	Supporters, but no opponents	Supporters and opponents
1	Definitely yes	26%	25%	28%
2	Probably yes	34%	35%	34%
3	Probably no	10%	8%	11%
4	Definitely no	22%	25%	20%
98	Not sure	6%	8%	4%
99	Prefer not to answer	1%	0%	2%

<b>Section 7: Negative Arguments</b>							
Next, let me tell you what opponents of the measure are saying.							
Q10	Opponents of the measure say: ----- Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE the measure?	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Not at all convincing	Don't believe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
	<i>Randomize</i>						
A	Local residents and businesses have been hit hard by runaway inflation, high interest rates, and high gas prices. Many are struggling to stay afloat. Now is not the time to raise taxes.	41%	35%	18%	2%	2%	2%
B	Truckee 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.	45%	30%	19%	3%	1%	2%
C	There are no guarantees on how funds will be spent, which means the Town can divert the money to pet projects without any say from voters. We can't trust the Town with our tax dollars. They will mismanage the money.	33%	29%	22%	12%	2%	2%
D	Over the past four years Truckee has increased the trails tax, increased the fire tax, and increased the hotel tax. Now they want to increase taxes <i>again</i> ? Enough is enough. We can't afford to keep raising our taxes.	44%	31%	17%	4%	1%	2%
<i>Random half of respondents receive item E.</i>							
E	If approved, this tax will last forever. It will never expire.	28%	29%	26%	11%	4%	3%

**Section 8: Final Ballot Test**

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

*Split Sample. Sample A receives 'Sample A' version of supporters/opponents. Sample B receives 'Sample B' version.*

**Truckee Essential Services Measure.** Shall the measure protecting essential Town services such as:

- Providing local transit, neighborhood shuttles, and TART Connect;
- Reducing traffic congestion;
- Protecting open space and the environment;
- Creating local workforce housing;
- and for general government use

by establishing a ½% (one-half percent) sales tax, providing approximately \$3,500,000 (three and one-half million dollars) annually until ended by voters, with independent audits and all funds staying local for Truckee, be adopted?

*Sample A:* Listed **supporters** of the measure are local environmentalists, transit advocates, and Truckee councilmembers. Listed **opponents**: none submitted.

*Sample B:* Listed **supporters** of the measure are local environmentalists, transit advocates, and Truckee councilmembers. Listed **opponents** of the measure are a taxpayer association and local business owner.

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)?*

		Overall	Supporters, but no opponents	Supporters and opponents
1	Definitely yes	24%	21%	26%
2	Probably yes	32%	33%	31%
3	Probably no	14%	11%	16%
4	Definitely no	23%	26%	20%
98	Not sure	6%	8%	5%
99	Prefer not to answer	1%	0%	2%

**Section 9: Background & Demographics**

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

Q12	In your opinion, has the Town of Truckee done an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job of managing its financial resources?		
	1	Excellent	7%
	2	Good	31%
	3	Fair	29%
	4	Poor	9%
	5	Very poor	4%
	98	Not sure	19%
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%

Q13	Do you have children under the age of 18 living in your household?		
	1	Yes	34%
	2	No	65%
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%

Q14	Have you or members of your household ridden TART-connect, local shuttles and/or transit in the past 12 months?		
	1	Yes	50%
	2	No	49%
	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	47%
	2	Female	48%
	3	Non-binary	1%
	99	Prefer not to answer	5%

S2 Party		
1	Democrat	51%
2	Republican	17%
3	Other	10%
4	DTS	22%
S3 Age on Voter File		
1	18 to 29	12%
2	30 to 39	15%
3	40 to 49	19%
4	50 to 64	29%
5	65 or older	26%
S4 Registration Date		
1	Since Nov 2018	13%
2	Jun 2012 to before Nov 2018	13%
3	Jun 2006 to before Jun 2012	13%
4	Before June 2006	61%
S5 Household Party Type		
1	Single Dem	29%
2	Dual Dem	13%
3	Single Rep	8%
4	Dual Rep	5%
5	Single Other	18%
6	Dual Other	7%
7	Dem & Rep	3%
8	Dem & Other	13%
9	Rep & Other	3%
0	Mixed (Dem + Rep + Other)	1%
S6 Homeowner on Voter File		
1	Yes	65%
2	No	35%

S7	Likely to Vote by Mail		
	1	Yes	91%
	2	No	9%
S8	Likely November 2024 Voter		
	1	Yes	100%
	2	No	0%
S9	Voting Propensity		
	1	High	74%
	2	Medium / Low	26%
S10	Ballot Test Version		
	Supporters, but no opponents		50%
	Supporters and opponents		50%