



Contra Costa Transportation Authority



Contra Costa County Voter Research September 2015

Presented to CCTA Board September 16, 2015



Purpose and Methodology

Survey Objectives

1. Understand relative regional priorities
2. Measure receptivity to possible revenue measure models
 - ½ cent CCTA specific tax
 - ½ cent County specific tax (¼ cent for transportation and ¼ cent for public safety)
 - ¼ cent CCTA specific tax
 - ¼ cent County specific tax (for public safety)
3. Understand impact of potential CCTA/County measure and potential BART bond sharing a ballot
4. Understand potential impact of information on support for a revenue measure
5. Track key measures of tax sensitivity
6. Understand trust in CCTA and County



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Methodology

- ▶ Telephone survey of likely voters in Contra Costa County
- ▶ Conducted August 26-September 3, 2015
- ▶ 800 total interviews, Margin of Error ± 3.5 percentage points
- ▶ Respondents were split into four sample groups, with each receiving one of four potential sales tax measures
- ▶ Weighted to reflect overall countywide likely November 2016 voter population using key demographics
- ▶ Interviewing started trained, professional interviewers
- ▶ Where applicable, results compared with:
 - EMC #14-5035: January 21st – February 5th, 2014 (n=814; MoE: + 3.4 % points)
 - EMC #14-5170: March 3-10, 2014 (n=606; MoE: + 4.0 % points)

Please note that due to rounding, percentages may not add up to exactly 100%



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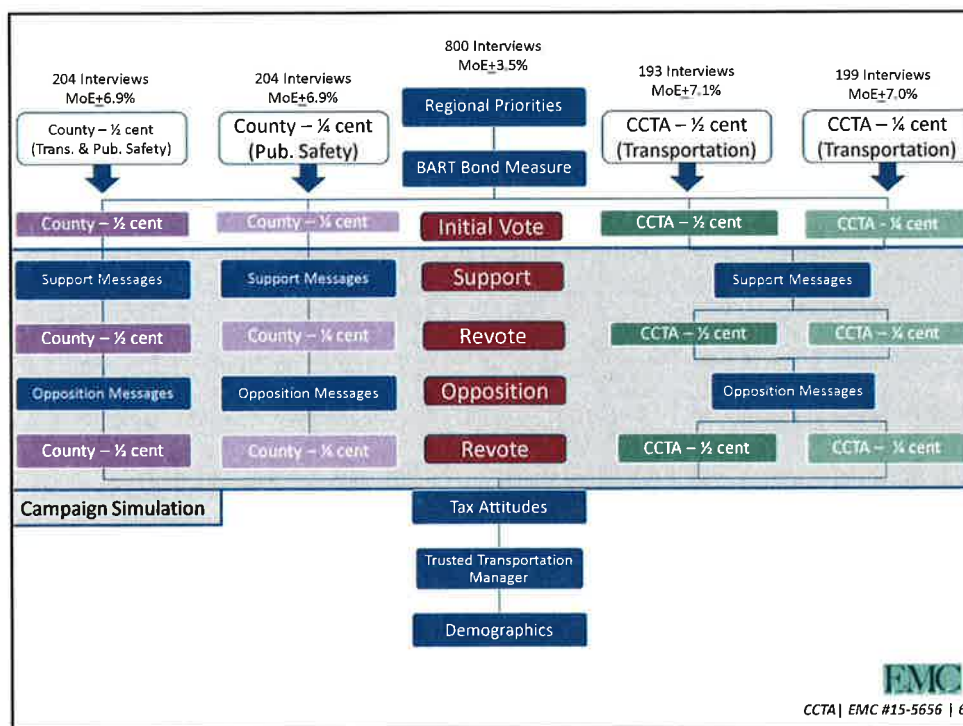
Split Sample Methodology

- Respondents were randomly assigned to one of four samples. Each sample tested a different potential Contra Costa County sales tax measure along with support and opposition messaging tailored to the assigned measure.

Sample A	Sample B	Sample C	Sample D
<i>County Specific – ½ cent Transportation/ Public Safety Tax</i>	<i>County Specific – ¼ cent Public Safety Tax</i>	<i>CCTA Specific – ½ cent Tax</i>	<i>CCTA Specific – ¼ cent Tax</i>
n=204	n=204	n=193	n=199
MoE: ± 6.9%	MoE: ± 6.9%	MoE: ± 7.1%	MoE: ± 7.0%



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November 2004 Contra Costa County Ballot List

*All state and local measures on the ballot in Contra Costa County in November 2004. **Bold text denotes a revenue measure.***

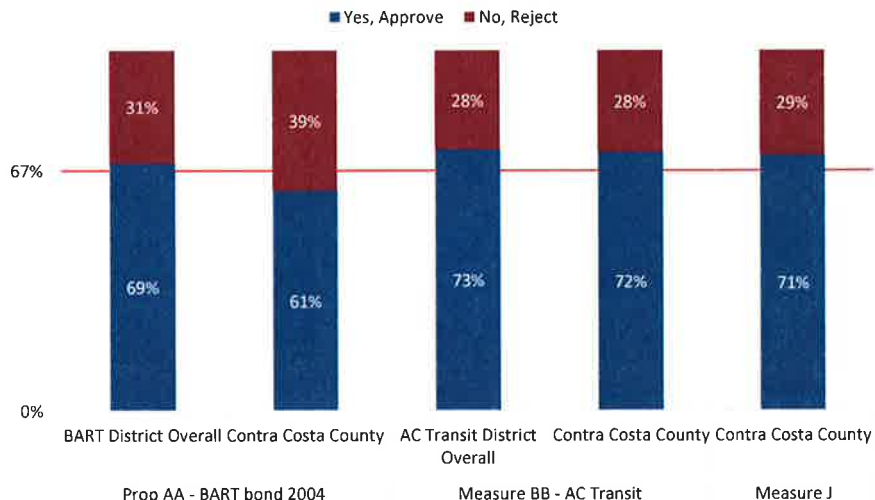
State Measures	Countywide Measures	Local Measures
1A – Keeping local sales tax revenues local	J – CCTA sales tax (71.1%)	BB – AC Transit Special Service District 1 parcel tax (partial county) (71.8% in CoCoCo)
59 – Sunshine amendment	AA – BART bond (61.0%)	CC – EBRPD Zone 1 parcel tax (partial county)
60 – Political party election rights act		D, E, G, H - School revenue measures in Livermore, Pittsburg, Byron, Oakley
60A – Sell surplus gov't property to reduce debt		K, L, P, S - UUT measures in El Cerrito, Hercules, Pinole, San Pablo
61 - Bonds for children's hospital projects (65.3% in CoCoCo)		M – General plan amendment in Hercules
62 – Modified primary elections		N, O – City bond measures in Lafayette, Martinez
63 – Income tax increase for mental health services (56.2% in CoCoCo)		Q – Transaction Use Tax in Richmond
65 – Require voter approval to reduce local gov't revenues		R – Charter amendment in Richmond
66 – Changes to 3 strikes		T, U – TOT in San Pablo, San Ramon
67 – Telephone call tax for emergency medical services (31.0% in CoCoCo)		V, X – Administrative measures in San Ramon, Walnut Creek
68 – Tribal gaming compact amendments		
69 – Require DNA samples from felons		
70 – Tribal gaming compact amendments		
71 – Bonds for stem cell research (66.4% in CoCoCo)		
72 – Healthcare coverage requirements		



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November 2004 Contra Costa County Transportation Ballot Items

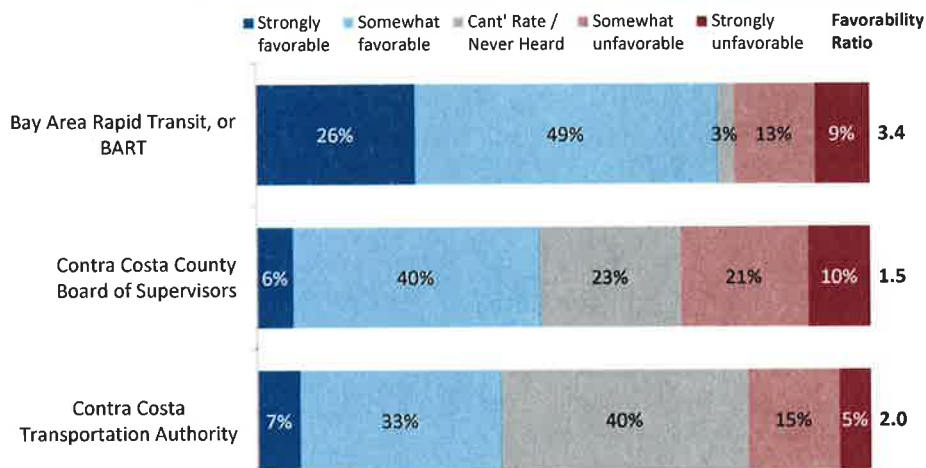
All three transportation measures on the ballot in November 2004 passed.



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Favorable Ratings

The Board of Supervisors has a slightly higher favorable rating than the CCTA, however, nearly one-third of voters give the Board an unfavorable rating.



Q24-26. Now, I'm going to read you a list of organizations. For each one, please tell me if you have a strongly favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or strongly unfavorable opinion of each one. If you have never heard of one, please just say so.

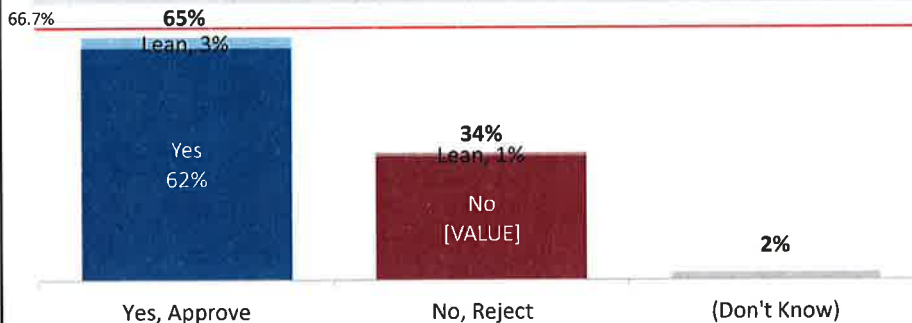


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BART Measure Vote

A BART bond measure reaches nearly two-thirds support in Contra Costa County.

In order to replace and modernize BART's deteriorating 44-year old infrastructure to keep BART safe; prevent breakdowns and delays; improve earthquake safety; increase the number of people BART can carry; relieve traffic congestion; improve access for people with disabilities; reduce overcrowding; reduce pollution; and keep trains and stations clean; shall the Bay Area Rapid Transit District issue \$3 billion of bonds subject to citizen oversight and independent, annual audits?



Q27. If this measure were on the ballot today, would you be likely to vote yes to approve it, or no to reject it?



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Ballot Language

SAMPLE A: ½ Cent County Sales Tax – Transportation and Public Safety

Shall voters authorize implementing the Contra Costa County Transportation and Public Safety Expenditure Plan to: Expand Bart in Contra Costa County; Fix roads and improve highways; Reduce traffic congestion; Add firefighters and police; Reopen fire stations; and Improve emergency response time? Approval increases the existing County sales tax by a half of a cent, for 25-years, with independent oversight and audits. All money spent will benefit Contra Costa County residents.

SAMPLE B: ¼ Cent County Sales Tax – Public Safety

To fight crime, respond quickly to medical emergencies and fires, and make Contra Costa County safer by: adding firefighters and police; increasing neighborhood police patrols; updating firefighter safety equipment and stations; and re-opening fire stations; shall Contra Costa County enact a quarter of a cent sales tax for 25-years, that cannot be taken by the state, with annual public audits and citizens oversight to ensure fiscal accountability?

SAMPLE C/D: ½ and ¼ Cent CCTA Sales Tax

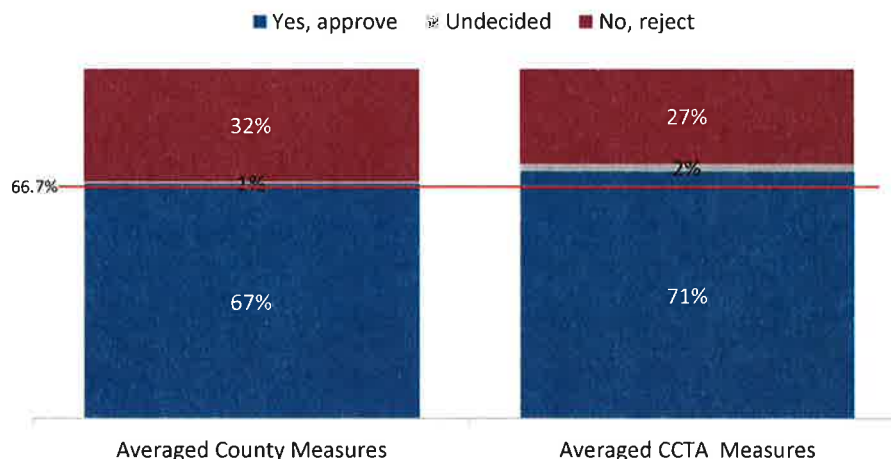
Shall voters authorize implementing the Contra Costa County 25- year Transportation Expenditure Plan to: Expand Bart in Contra Costa County; Improve transit connections to jobs and schools; Fix roads, improve highways and increase bicycle and pedestrian safety; Reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality; Enhance transit services for seniors and people with disabilities? Approval increases by a half/quarter cent and extends the existing County sales tax, with independent oversight and audits. All money spent will benefit Contra Costa County residents.



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Initial Vote – All Samples

CCTA measures receive moderately higher support than County measures.



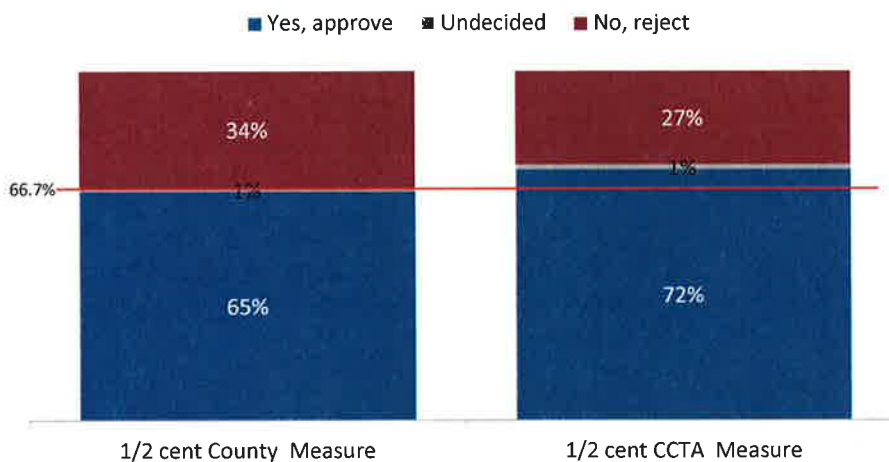
If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure? (IF UNDECIDED):
Which way do you lean — toward voting "Yes" to approve, or toward voting "No" to reject?



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Initial Vote – by ½ cent

A CCTA ½ cent measure receives higher support than a ½ cent County measure.

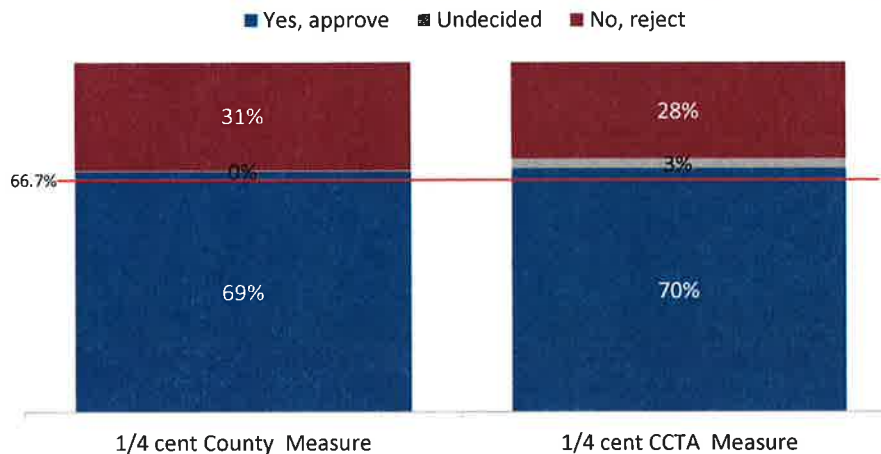


If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure? (IF UNDECIDED):
Which way do you lean — toward voting "Yes" to approve, or toward voting "No" to reject?

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Initial Vote – by ¼ cent

A ¼ cent measure receives nearly equal support when presented by the County or the CCTA.

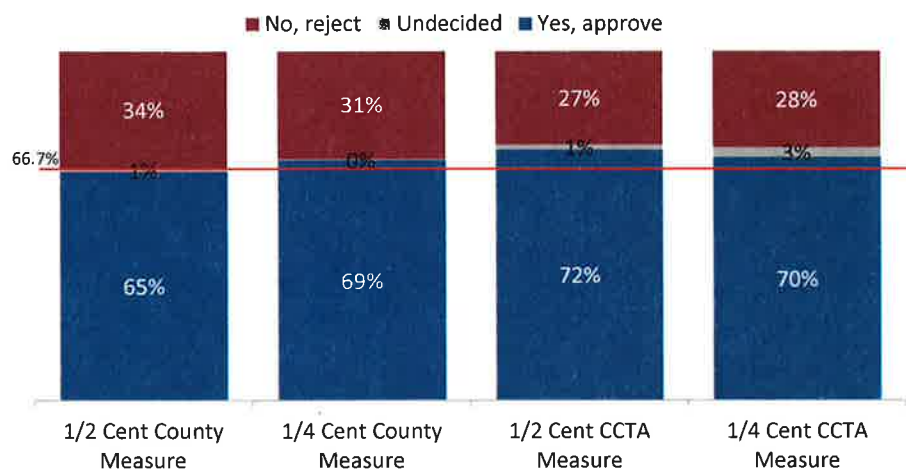


If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure? (IF UNDECIDED):
Which way do you lean — toward voting "Yes" to approve, or toward voting "No" to reject?

EMC
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Initial Vote – All County and CCTA Measures

A ½ cent transportation measure receives the most support.



*If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?
(IF UNDECIDED): Which way do you lean — toward voting "Yes" to approve, or toward voting "No" to reject?*

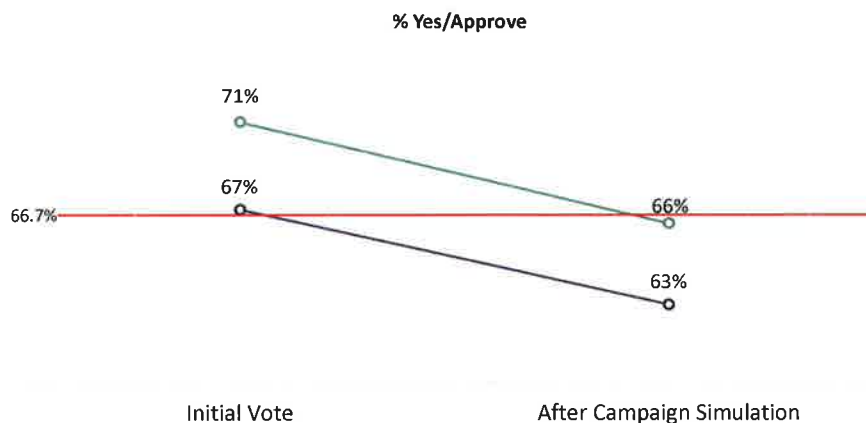


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Summary of Support for Potential Measures

Even after a simulated campaign environment, with both support and opposition messaging, the CCTA measures remain stronger than the County measures.

○ Averaged County Measures ○ Averaged CCTA Measures



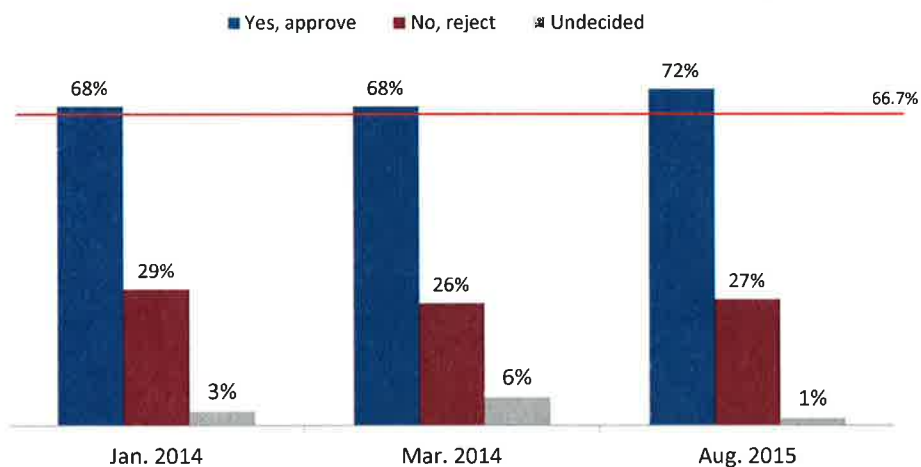
If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure? (IF UNDECIDED): Which way do you lean — toward voting "Yes" to approve, or toward voting "No" to reject?



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Vote Over Time – ½ Cent CCTA Measure

Support for a ½ cent transportation measure has remained consistent over the past year.



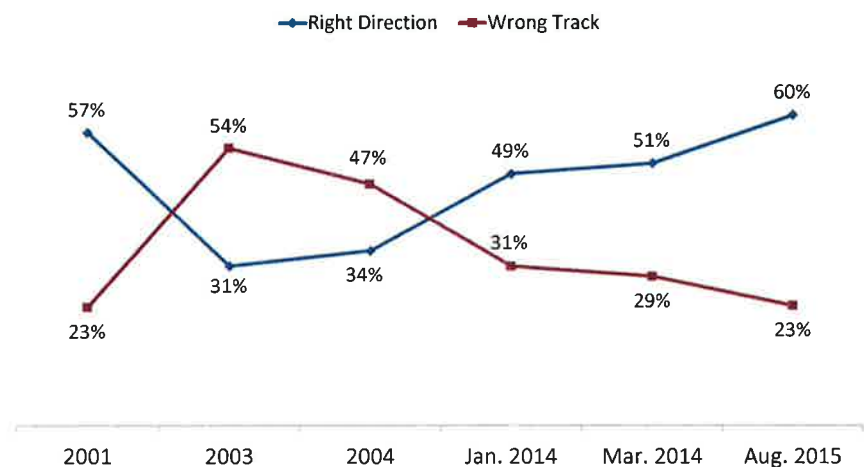
Q30. If this measure were on the ballot today, would you be likely to vote yes to approve it, or no to reject it?



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Right Direction/Wrong Track

Optimism in Contra Costa County is on the rise.



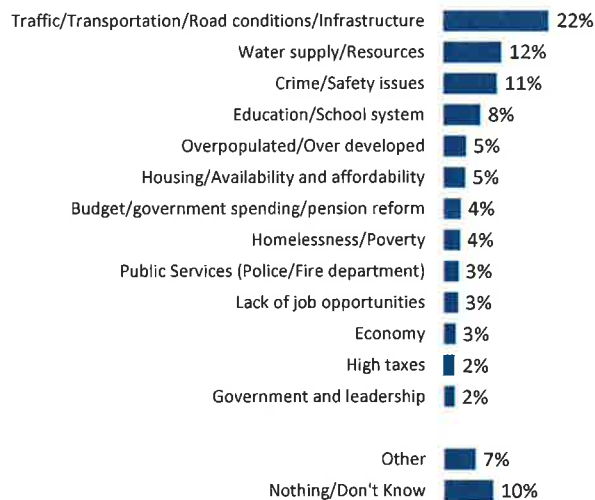
Q4. Do you think things in Contra Costa County are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel that things are pretty seriously off on the wrong track?



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Most Important Problem Facing Contra Costa County

Transportation and traffic are a top concern among Contra Costa voters.



Q5. What do you feel is the most important problem facing Contra Costa County today?

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Conclusions

- ▶ A measure exclusively for transportation improvements presented by the CCTA receives moderately higher support among voters, compared to a measure presented by the County.
- ▶ With nearly one-third of voters rating the Board of Supervisors unfavorably, reaching two-thirds support for a county-presented sales tax measure will be challenging.

Note: Presented summary of results with the above conclusions to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors on September 15, 2015.

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Key Findings

Key Findings

- ▶ Transportation related issues are a top concern among Contra Costa voters.
- ▶ Initial support for a ½ cent transportation sales tax exceeds two thirds; a campaign simulation drops support to slightly less than two-thirds.
- ▶ A transportation sales tax measure receives moderately higher support than a County measure.
- ▶ There is greater trust of CCTA to handle transportation projects, compared to the County.



CCTA | EMC #15-5656 | 22

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3.1 NEW ITEM: Summary of Public Opinion Polling. Between the dates of August 26 and September 3, 2015, EMC Research (sub-consultant to Gray-Bowen-Scott) conducted a survey of 800 Contra Costa County likely November 2016 voters. Respondents were split into four sample groups with each receiving one of four sample potential sales tax measures. The sample sales tax measures tested were a 1/2 cent Contra Costa County specific tax; a 1/4 cent Contra Costa County specific tax; a 1/2 cent Authority sponsored transportation tax and a 1/4 cent Authority sponsored transportation tax. The survey also studied the effect of a potential BART bond measure sharing the November 2016 ballot. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.5%. Results will be presented at the Authority Board meeting. Staff Contact: Ross Chittenden

ACTION: None taken – information only

DISCUSSION: Ross Chittenden, Deputy Executive Director for Projects, said that the Authority had previously discussed the potential for competing and/or complimentary ballot initiatives that could be developed by Fall 2016, including possible measures by BART and Contra Costa County, and that EMC Research was asked to conduct some polling to test likely voters in their opinions of different possible scenarios. He noted that a summary of the results was discussed at a meeting of the County Board of Supervisors on the previous day.

Mr. Chittenden introduced Alex Evans of EMC Research, who gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Contra Costa County voter research that was done by his firm. The presentation included an overview of survey objectives, methodology, results and conclusion.

Mr. Evans stated that survey objectives were to understand regional priorities of Contra Costa's voters, and test each of four different ballot measure scenarios with the understanding that only one of them would move forward. Additionally, the survey was developed to help understand the impact of a potential CCTA/County measure and potential BART bond sharing a ballot, understand potential impact of information on support for a revenue measure, track key measures of tax sensitivity, and understand trust in CCTA and the County.

The telephone survey, conducted between August 26th and September 3rd, included a total of 800 likely Contra Costa County voters. Respondents were split into four sample groups, with each group being polled on only one of four potential sales tax measures that included support and opposition messaging tailored to the assigned measure.

Mr. Evans reviewed graphics depicting other State and local measures that were on the ballot in November 2004 (when Measure J was approved), the percentages by which each of the transportation measures on the ballot passed, and comparing favorable ratings of BART, the County Board of Supervisors, and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) which indicate that CCTA is in a better position than the County for a successful sales tax measure. Mr. Evans said that EMC Research tested a possible BART \$3 billion bond measure using the same language used by BART in its own polling, and that the polling indicated that 65 percent of voters in Contra Costa would be willing to support it. Mr. Evans noted that despite the fact that a possible BART bond measure requires a two-thirds supermajority, BART would view the 65% support as positive. Voters in Alameda County tend to support BART bond measures, and support in San Francisco tends to exceed the two-thirds threshold in an amount that will compensate for support in Contra Costa County that may be below the two-thirds threshold.

Mr. Evans outlined each of the four different possible sales tax measures (two CCTA measures and two County measures) which were tested to determine strengths and/or weaknesses of a County or CCTA ballot measure, and discussed the polling results. Approval of the two CCTA measures averaged slightly higher than the average of the two County measures. Mr. Evans reported that the CCTA ½ cent measure received higher support (72 percent) than the County ½ cent measure (65 percent), and the ¼ percent measure received nearly equal support when presented by CCTA or the County. Of the four measures tested, the ½ cent CCTA measure received the most support (72

percent), and the ½ cent County measure received the least (65 percent). Mr. Evans stated that after voters were provided with support and opposition messaging as part of a simulated campaign environment, average approval of both the CCTA and County measures decreased although the CCTA measures remained stronger than the County measures.

Mr. Evans reviewed a final set of graphics which included a comparison of 2014 and 2015 polling results, “right direction” versus “wrong track” sentiment, and voter opinion of the most important problem facing Contra Costa County. They illustrated that support for a ½ cent measure remains fairly consistent, optimism in Contra Costa County is on the rise, and voters view traffic, transportation, road conditions and infrastructure as a top concern.

In summary, Mr. Evans stated that CCTA was in a modestly better position to go forward with a transportation sales tax ballot measure. He cautioned that while Contra Costa County voters view transportation as their top concern and initial support for a ½ cent transportation sales measure brought forward by CCTA exceeds the 2/3 approval requirement, campaign simulation drops the approval rating to 66 percent and therefore the campaign would not be easy.

The presentation was distributed as a meeting handout.

Commissioner Arnerich noted that prior polls seemed to include commuters and people more likely to use public transportation. He asked what percentage of people contacted for the 2015 polling were willing to participate in the survey. Mr. Evans responded that he did not have the percentage on hand, however his firm did not experience any unusual difficulty (relative to other surveys conducted by EMC Research) in identifying 800 voters willing to cooperate. Mr. Evans stated that he was quite confident that the random sample was representative of November 2016 voters.