



PAJARO VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

**OPINION RESEARCH AND SURVEY
OF DISTRICT-WIDE REGISTERED VOTERS**

JULY 12, 2018

PREPARED FOR:

**PAJARO VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

PREPARED BY:

SCIConsultingGroup

4745 MANGELS BOULEVARD
FAIRFIELD, CALIFORNIA 94534
PHONE 707.430.4300
FAX 707.430.4319
www.sci-cg.com

(This page deliberately left blank)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Opinion Research and Survey report was prepared by SCI Consulting Group under contract with the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District.

The work was accomplished under the general direction of the following persons:

- Sean Murray, Fire Chief
- Steve Lo, Committee Member
- Sarah Chauvet, Director
- Dave Martone, Director

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or copied in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including any photocopying, recording, taping, or information storage and retrieval systems, without permission of SCI Consulting Group.

SCI Consulting Group
4745 Mangels Boulevard
Fairfield, CA 94534
Phone: 707.430.4300
Fax: 707.430.4319

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| PURPOSE..... | 1 |
| METHODOLOGY | 2 |
| SAMPLE | 3 |
| DATA COLLECTION METHOD..... | 3 |
| ACCURACY | 3 |
| SPECIAL TAX FUNDING OVERVIEW | 4 |
| SURVEY FINDINGS..... | 5 |
| TYPES OF PROPERTY..... | 5 |
| FIRST SURVEY QUESTION | 6 |
| OVERALL SUPPORT BY PROPOSED RATE..... | 7 |
| DETAILED SUPPORT BY PROPOSED RATE | 7 |
| SUPPORT BY AGE | 9 |
| SUPPORT BY POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION | 10 |
| SERVICE PRIORITIES..... | 11 |
| OTHER FINDINGS..... | 13 |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | 14 |
| FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ARE DESIRED | 14 |
| CONSIDER A REDUCTION IN RATE | 14 |
| INCREASED AND SUSTAINED INFORMATIONAL OUTREACH..... | 15 |
| FINAL THOUGHTS AND MACRO-LEVEL FACTORS..... | 18 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|----|
| FIGURE 1 – PROPERTY TYPES BY LANDUSE | 5 |
| FIGURE 2 – OVERALL SUPPORT BY PROPOSED RATE..... | 7 |
| FIGURE 3 – DETAILED SUPPORT BY PROPOSED RATE | 8 |
| FIGURE 4 – SUPPORT BY AGE | 9 |
| FIGURE 5 – SUPPORT BY PARTY AFFILIATION | 10 |
| FIGURE 6 – VOTER PRIORITIES – DETAILED SUPPORT BY PROJECTS AND ISSUES FOR ALL RESPONDENTS..... | 12 |
| FIGURE 7 –COMMENTS RECEIVED IN FAVOR OF THE PROPOSED MEASURE..... | 13 |
| FIGURE 8 –COMMENTS RECEIVED AGAINST THE PROPOSED MEASURE | 13 |

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This report presents the findings of a scientific survey of property owners and voters within the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District (“District”) conducted by SCI Consulting Group (SCI). The District is interested in establishing a new funding source that would help continue, and potentially improve, the existing fire protection and emergency medical services currently provided.

The primary purposes of the study were to:

- Evaluate the support, desires, and priorities of registered voters within the District by voter demographic, with respect to the proposed fire protection and emergency medical services.
- Measure the level of financial support for a local funding measure to provide the highest quality fire and emergency response services.

The surveys were sent out with an informational page that provided an overview of the District’s fire protection and emergency medical services. The proposed annual tax rate was \$75 for the first residential unit for residential properties, \$52.25 for each additional residential unit, \$56.25 per parcel for unimproved property (agricultural 1 acre or less, vacant lots, parking etc.) and \$250 for a commercial parcel, as well as any agricultural parcel greater than 1 acre, in conjunction with the identified financial needs of the District.

The information page that accompanied the survey questionnaire provided details regarding the history and composition of the District, a brief discussion of current funding and cost cutting efforts to date, outlined the issues faced by the District, and identified the financial needs of the District. Finally, there was information provided regarding how the funding would be used, should a revenue measure pass. Every effort was made to keep the information factual and to avoid the impression of advocating for a potential measure.

After a brief overview of the methodology employed in the survey, this report presents a summary of the key survey findings. The survey utilized a mailed survey approach because SCI has found this survey technique to more closely, and accurately, model actual results for a ballot proceeding.

METHODOLOGY

The Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District is an independently funded public agency (separate from any city or county) that provides year-round fire protection and emergency medical services to a population of over 18,000 residents and covers an area of approximately 52 square miles. The Pajaro Valley FPD is the largest fire district in Santa Cruz County, and primarily serves the communities east of Highway 1 surrounding Watsonville.

The District is currently funded through a small portion of local property taxes, as well as a parcel tax. The current parcel tax was approved in 1996 with no cost of living adjustment mechanism and has not been increased in the last 22 years. The Fire District has taken major steps to reduce operating costs including making significant budget cuts and eliminating staffing positions. However, these cuts are unsustainable, and the Fire District needs a long term financial solution. The District's revenue base is not sufficient, even with the cost savings efforts of contracting with CAL FIRE for personnel, as well as deferring capital replacement fund contributions.

Without any additional funding within three years, the Fire District will again be confronted with a budget deficit and will be forced to make additional staffing and services cuts. After considerable review of available options, the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District is interested in exploring a new local funding source in order to continue financing the fire protection and emergency medical services it provides. The new proposed special tax would be used to continue providing year round fire protection and emergency medical services in the community.

The Fire District has identified the following primary and essential service areas to maintain:

- Keep current staffing level of 3 personnel, which provides full-time coverage, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to better protect lives and property.
- Additional funds will allow the Fire District to maintain reliable fire apparatus and equipment, and to remain fiscally responsible by dedicating funds for replacements and minimizing interest paid.
- Without additional funds the Fire District will soon be faced with difficult decisions. A decrease in firefighters per engine, or closure of the fire station would result in an increased ISO rating for the community.

The survey was designed to test the universe of the registered voter response pool, and the data collection methods of the survey mirror the actual ballot procedures of an election mechanism as closely as possible. In this way, the survey results will be predictive in evaluating the support levels a special tax measure would likely receive on the actual ballot election.

SAMPLE

SCI created a stratified sample pool that included most of the qualified registered voters in the District. The sample was designed to draw from the voters eligible to participate in the election proceeding for this funding mechanism.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

On May 8, 2018, 7,193 surveys were mailed to registered voters within the District. The survey mailings included general information about the fire protection and emergency medical services, and a questionnaire with an enclosed postage-paid return envelope. This data collection method has proven to be highly reliable for predicting the results from an actual special tax measure. Survey recipients were also given the option to respond to the survey online.

Surveys were returned up to June 15, 2018. About 580 surveys have been received from the registered voters, representing a response rate of 8.06%. This response rate is slightly lower than what is generally consistent with SCI's experience from other similar survey projects.

ACCURACY

The statistical margin of error for the results presented in this report is about 3.87%. This margin of error means that there is a 96% certainty that the actual levels of support in the area are +/- 3.87% from the results presented in this report.

SPECIAL TAX FUNDING OVERVIEW

The funding mechanism being considered in this study is a special tax or parcel tax. Special taxes are a common local funding alternative for fire protection and emergency response services, and such taxes have been approved in many other areas in California. Parcel taxes are levies on real property that can be based on either a flat or tiered methodology for the services to be funded by the levy. Such taxes for the fire protection and emergency response services have a long history of use in California.

A parcel tax is decided by registered voters in the District, typically in a one-day election, and it requires 66.7% voter support. In an election to approve a parcel tax, only registered voters are eligible to vote. This includes tenants who will not pay the proposed tax, and excludes property owners such as business owners, apartment owners and others who will have to pay the tax. Because non-owner voters have a significant say in parcel tax elections and many other property owners who would pay the taxes are excluded from the voting, the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association (“HJTA”), via Proposition 13, established a two-thirds (super-majority) requirement for parcel tax elections.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Before discussing the survey findings, it is helpful to review the types of property in the District.

TYPES OF PROPERTY

The following Figure presents the parcel breakdown in the District by Landuse. As shown below, in the District, residential properties represent approximately 82.3% of the overall parcels; non-residential (commercial, industrial, agriculture and vacant) properties are 14.5% of the parcels; and non-taxable properties are 3.2% of the total parcel count.

FIGURE 1 – PROPERTY TYPES BY LANDUSE

| Parcel Landuse | # of parcels | % of overall | res units | acres | bldg sqft |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| single family residential (SFR) | 3,196 | 75% | 3,248 | 13,525 | 4,863,442 |
| multiple SFR (2-4 units) | 204 | 5% | 340 | 350 | 251,284 |
| multiple SFR (>4 units) | 8 | 0% | 223 | 45 | 2,202 |
| mobile home in MH Park (tax-exempt) | 81 | 2% | 81 | - | 100,977 |
| mobile Home Park-MHP | 1 | 0% | 100 | 22 | - |
| commercial / ag >1acre | 514 | 12% | 35 | 857 | 186,450 |
| vacant/ ag/ parking | 99 | 2% | 15 | 12,839 | 341,712 |
| non taxable | 136 | 3% | - | 316 | - |
| Total | 4,239 | 100% | 4,042 | 27,954 | 5,746,067 |

| Main Landuse Groups | # of parcels | % of overall | res units | acres | bldg sqft |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|------------------|
| residential | 3,489 | 82.3% | 3892 | 13,920 | 5,217,905 |
| MHP | 1 | 0.0% | 100 | - | - |
| non-residential | 613 | 14.5% | 50 | 13,696 | 528,162 |
| non-taxable | 136 | 3.2% | 0 | 316 | - |
| Total | 4,239 | 100% | 4042 | 27,932 | 5,746,067 |

FIRST SURVEY QUESTION

After the voter propensity was calculated, based on voter turnout for various prior elections, the survey questionnaire and informational sheets were finalized and mailed. The survey documents were mailed to registered voters within the District boundaries. In the survey, recipients were first asked whether they would support or oppose a proposal to pay an annual property tax for fire protection and emergency medical services.

The first survey question on the proposed local funding measure for fire protection and emergency medical services was as follows:

In order to:

- *Maintain rapid response times for emergency medical services and fire protection; and*
- *Retain current firefighter staffing to maintain fire and emergency services while avoiding service reductions; and*
- *Continue maintenance, repair, and replacement of firefighting apparatus, vehicles and equipment,*

Would you support a new annual special tax for the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District at a rate of \$75.00 per single family residence?*

***Proposed rate structure**

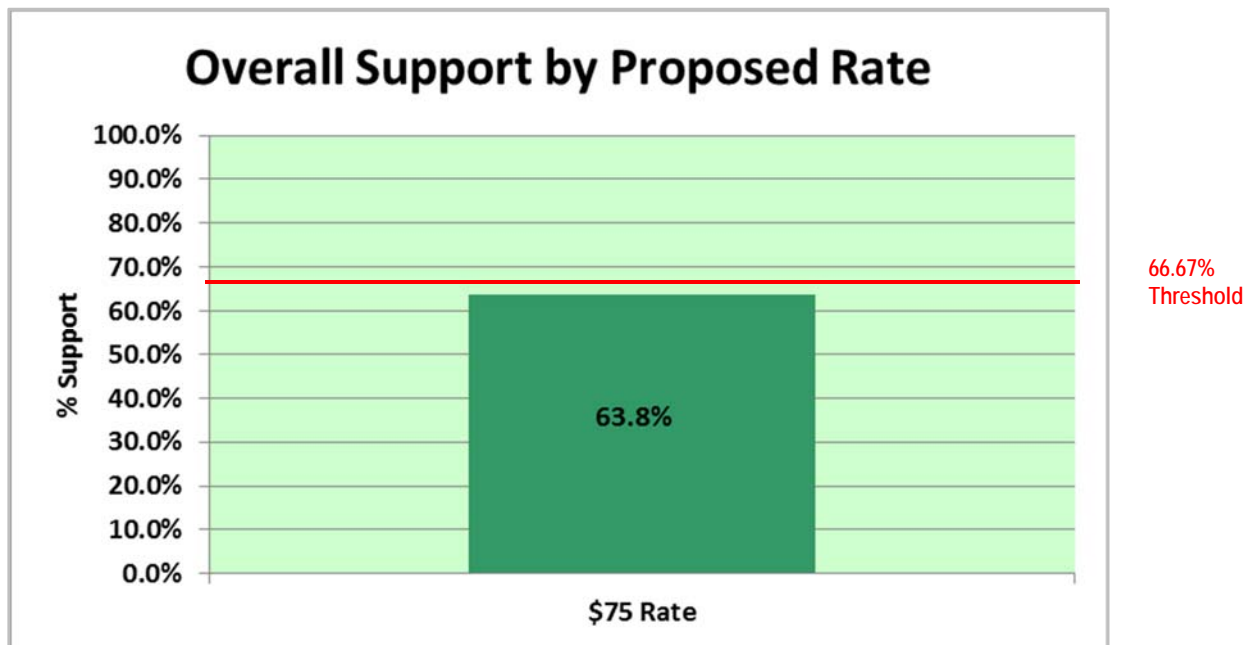
- 1st Residential Unit: \$75.00
- Each additional residential unit: \$56.25
- Unimproved Parcel: \$56.25
- Commercial Parcel: \$250.00
- Agricultural: \$56.25 one acre or less
- Agricultural: \$250.00 greater than 1 acre

This new proposed special tax would be in addition to your current annual tax.

OVERALL SUPPORT BY PROPOSED RATE

As noted, we tested one rate structure for this project in the amounts of \$75 for the first residential unit for residential properties, \$52.25 for each additional residential unit, \$56.25 per parcel for unimproved property (agricultural 1 acre or less, vacant lots, parking etc.) and \$250 for a commercial parcel, as well as any agricultural parcel greater than 1 acre. Figure 2 below shows the overall level of projected support for the rate tested. This chart shows that the overall level of support for \$75 at 63.8% support, which is lower than the 66.67% voting threshold for a special tax.

FIGURE 2 – OVERALL SUPPORT BY PROPOSED RATE



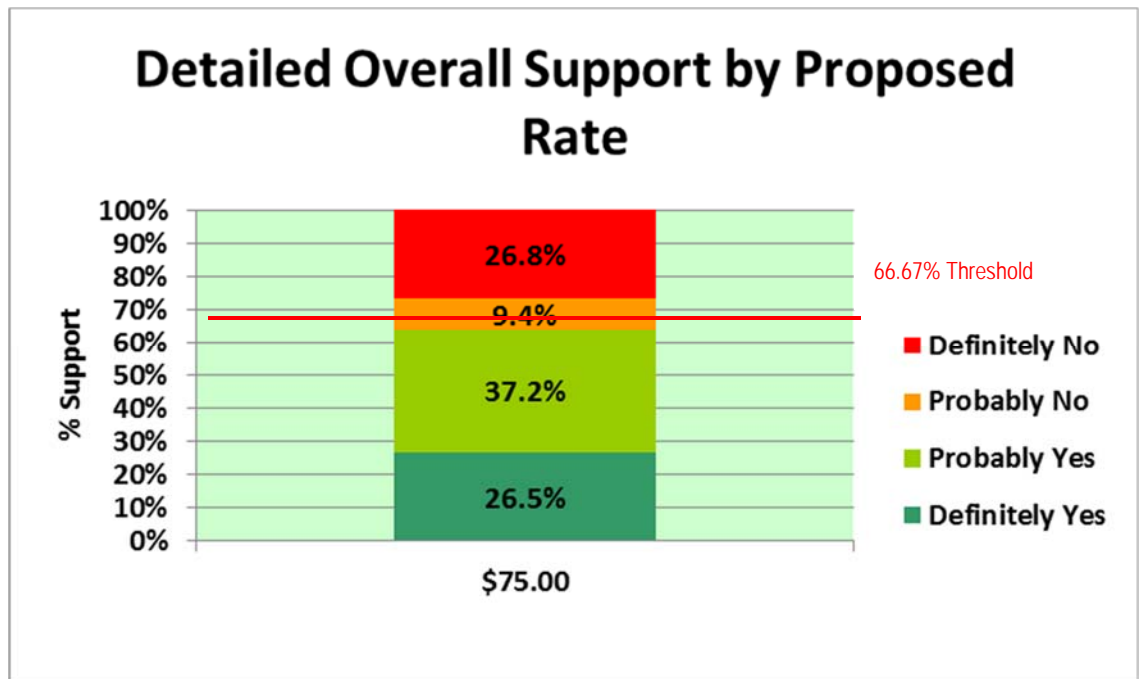
| Rate | Percent Support | Percent Oppose |
|-----------|-----------------|----------------|
| \$75 Rate | 63.8% | 36.2% |

DETAILED SUPPORT BY PROPOSED RATE

Figure 3 below shows the detailed level of projected support for the rate tested. This figure shows that just over one quarter of the respondents are a solid yes in favor of the proposed measure, but an even larger amount of the voters in support are in the “Probably Yes” category, which may indicate that they could be influenced by a strong and rigorous community outreach campaign. This is of considerable concern, as the majority of the support is not a solid “Definitely Yes” vote.

With almost the same exact support as the “Definitely Yes”, there are 26.8% of the registered voters within the Fire District that voted “Definitely No” to a possible funding measure. Unfortunately, SCI has found that most often these respondents will vote no on the actual ballot measure regardless of any further information presented to them. However, a small percentage of negative respondents were in the “Probably No” category. Additional information and outreach to more fully inform residents and voters about the need for continued funding for fire protection and emergency medical services could serve to improve support over time.

FIGURE 3 – DETAILED SUPPORT BY PROPOSED RATE

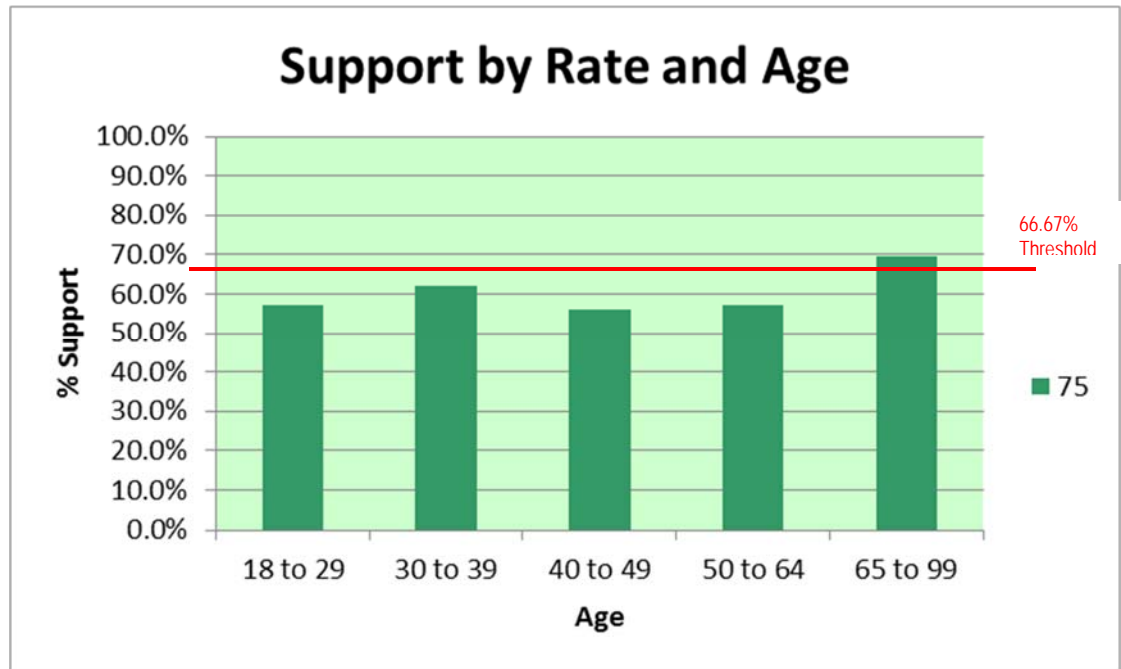


| Rate | Definitely Yes | Probably Yes | Total Support | Probably No | Definitely No | Total Opposition |
|---------|----------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|------------------|
| \$75.00 | 26.5% | 37.2% | 63.8% | 9.4% | 26.8% | 36.2% |

SUPPORT BY AGE

Figure 4 presents an analysis of levels of support from registered voters by age groupings. This data demonstrates that the 65 to 99 age group showed the most support for the proposed measure, with all other age groups falling below the two thirds required.

FIGURE 4 – SUPPORT BY AGE



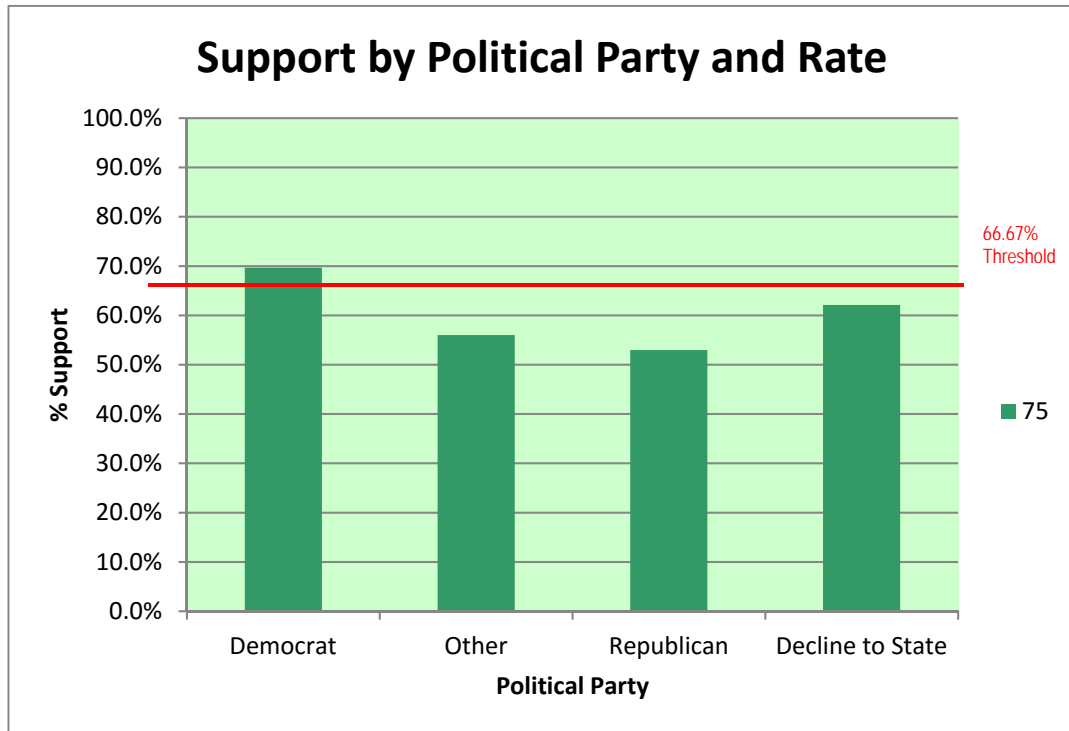
| Rate | 18 to 29 | 30 to 39 | 40 to 49 | 50 to 64 | 65 to 99 |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| \$75.00 | 57.1% | 62.1% | 56.1% | 57.3% | 69.4% |

Source: Santa Cruz County Registrar of Voters

SUPPORT BY POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION

Figure 5 presents the analysis of levels of support by political party affiliation of the registered voters. This data Democrats were the only political party that supported this past the 66.7% threshold.

FIGURE 5 – SUPPORT BY PARTY AFFILIATION



| Rate | Democrat | Other | Republican | Decline to State |
|---------|----------|-------|------------|------------------|
| \$75.00 | 69.7% | 56.0% | 52.9% | 62.1% |

Source: Santa Cruz County Registrar of Voters
 Note: Other = Neither Democrat nor Republican (e.g. No Party Preference, Independent, Green, Decline to State)

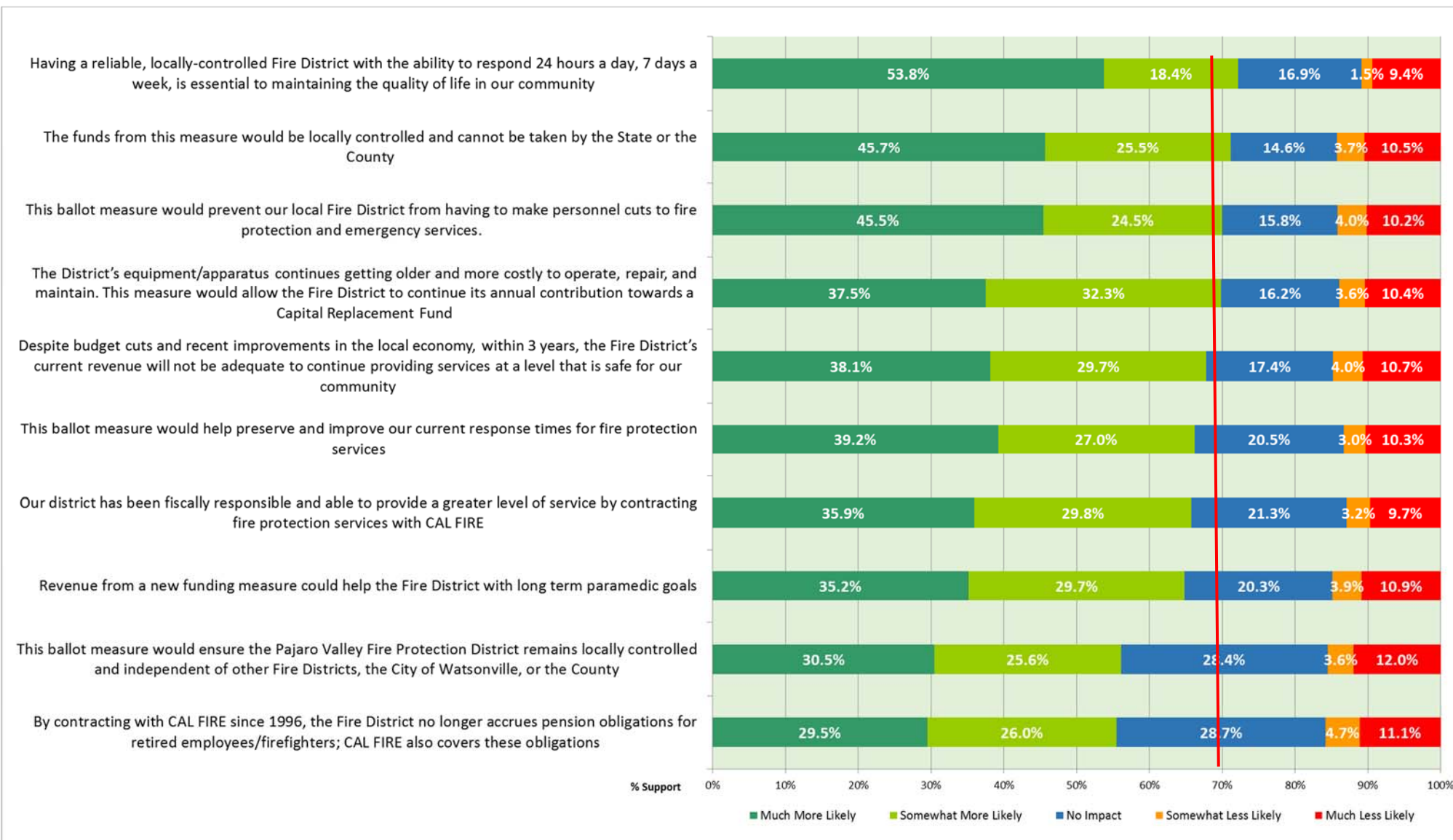
SERVICE PRIORITIES

After indicating their degree of support for the measure, registered voters were presented with a list of fire protection and emergency services and were asked to indicate their degree of support for each service. These questions were asked even of those voters who indicated that they intended to vote against the measure. This ensures that the fire protection and emergency service priority ratings reflect the overall community priorities, not just the interests of those who intend to vote for the measure. As the figure on the following page illustrates, the top priorities and features, garnering over 66.7% favorable responses or better, and listed in order by the level of support received were:

- Having a reliable, locally-controlled Fire District with the ability to respond 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, is essential to maintaining the quality of life in our community
- The funds from this measure would be locally controlled and cannot be taken by the State or the County
- This ballot measure would prevent our local Fire District from having to make personnel cuts to fire protection and emergency services.

These project priorities provide important insight to the community. The top priorities relate to maintaining the current level of fire protection and emergency medical services. Fiscal responsibility is also a great concern in the community; survey respondents indicated that they want assurances that the funding will be used solely by the District for fire protection and emergency medical services. The results for all the projects, issues and arguments are summarized in Figure 6.

FIGURE 6 – VOTER PRIORITIES – DETAILED SUPPORT BY PROJECTS AND ISSUES FOR ALL RESPONDENTS



OTHER FINDINGS

The survey included a section for respondents to indicate any other opinions and feedback regarding the proposed funding measures. Following is a summary of the comment categories. Figure 7 shows the comment categories received from respondents in favor of the proposed measure. Figure 8 lists the comment categories received from respondents who were against the proposed measure.

FIGURE 7 –COMMENTS RECEIVED IN FAVOR OF THE PROPOSED MEASURE

| Respondents in Favor of the Measure | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| # of comments | Comment Topic |
| 25 | Pajaro FPD is Important to the Community |
| 15 | Miscellaneous Support |
| 10 | Medical response times are critical to our community |
| 10 | This amount is too high. |
| 7 | Mistrust of Government Agencies |
| 6 | I would like more information |
| 6 | Keep insurance costs low |
| 79 | Total Comments in Favor |

FIGURE 8 –COMMENTS RECEIVED AGAINST THE PROPOSED MEASURE

| Respondents Against the Measure | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| # of comments | Comment Topic |
| 32 | Anti Tax |
| 24 | This is too much money |
| 17 | Miscellaneous Opposition |
| 9 | I would like additional information |
| 8 | Mistrust of Government Agencies |
| 7 | SRA Fee |
| 97 | Total Comments Against |

RECOMMENDATIONS

This survey indicates that while the services provided by the District are highly valued by the local community, the level of support by registered voters in the District is 2.9 points below the required 66.67% ballot threshold at the \$75 proposed rate. The survey respondent pool closely parallels the likely universe of registered voters who will vote in the special tax ballot election proceeding, and the survey results presented in this report have been adjusted to account for the projected ballot participation. Therefore, the overall results presented in this survey should be reflective of the actual ballot outcome from a special tax ballot election, assuming the measure does not receive organized opposition.

SCI makes the following recommendations regarding a special tax ballot proceeding to fund the maintenance and improvement of current services.

FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ARE DESIRED

The survey findings support the fact that fire protection and emergency medical services are currently desired by the community, but not at the level currently proposed by the District. Support for maintaining a locally controlled fire district 24-7 is high, as shown in Figure 6, which shows that the top 3 projects and issues tested above 66.7%.

CONSIDER A REDUCTION IN RATE

The level of support for the proposed rate of \$75 was below the required 66.67% required at 63.8% overall support. SCI advises the District to carefully consider making adjustments to the rate and composition of the proposed funding measure. The District should consider the potential impact of the following alternatives, as they could possibly increase the level of support in the community.

REDUCTION OF THE BASE RATE AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A considerable amount of the opposition to the proposed measure was likely in response to the proposed rate, especially the highest tiered rates of \$250 for commercial and agricultural over acre. By reducing the rate, the District may be able to increase support levels. Survey comments indicate support for the District's services but not enough income to support the proposed rates. The District may want to consider a rate below \$50 for residential and below \$200 for commercial and agricultural over 1 acre, which may generate greater support, unfortunately, of course, a rate reduction would result in less overall revenue.

USE OF A SUNSET OR EXPIRATION DATE TO THE PROPOSED MEASURE

Another point of potential opposition to the proposed measure is the implementation of the tax in perpetuity. While under most circumstances, SCI believes that funding measure sunsets or expiration clauses are not in the best interest of special districts, in this instance, a sunset clause may be able to increase support levels by a small, yet necessary amount.

ELIMINATE THE USE OF A CPI OR ESCALATING FACTOR

Another point of potential opposition to the proposed measure could be the inclusion of a Consumer Price Index cost of living escalator. Adding a CPI factor could potentially decrease support levels by a small but significant amount.

If the District is looking to move forward with an election it can consider excluding a CPI mechanism and adding a sunset clause that would provide the option for a renewal with CPI escalator in future years, with a new voter approved renewal measure.

INCREASED AND SUSTAINED INFORMATIONAL OUTREACH

If the District decides to proceed with a funding measure on the November 2018 ballot, a committed and rigorous outreach effort must be taken to inform all local community members, not just registered voters, about the types of services that are currently provided, and how these services would be provided, both with a new funding source and without one. The District may consider a 12 to 24 month community engagement effort, and then follow up with a tracker survey that would test for overall increased support for a funding measure.

CLEAR AND AUTHENTIC COMMUNICATION

The District should conduct traditional outreach messaging that highlights such services as maintaining rapid response, providing fire protection, ensuring emergency medical response, assisting with brush clearing, etc. Special emphasis should be made on the fact that additional funding is needed to ensure that the District remains locally controlled and independent from the County. There should also be outreach messaging that the District is not a part of the City of Watsonville and does not receive any sales tax revenue.

Voters today demand straightforward, authentic, clear, face-to-face communication based upon rigorous analysis and planning. E-mails and Facebook posts from known residents are also very effective. Expensive-looking and slick mailers and signs are only marginally effective today. Once the residents know and trust their local Fire District they will be more likely to support it and help it financially.

INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS AROUND SRA FEE

The District will need to address the CAL FIRE SRA Fee which, as of now, is no longer being collected. A number of comments stated people did not fully understand the SRA Fee and how it is not funding any local Pajaro Valley Fire services. Some comments stated they would like to vote for the measure however they are already paying the SRA Fee and cannot afford both, other comments suggested they were unclear as to what the \$117 they pay (paid) for fire is used for. A community outreach campaign should include awareness to the recent suspension to the SRA Fee, and lack of funding from this fee for the District.

ADDRESS THE KEY ISSUES AND FORM A CONSISTENT MESSAGE

The District will need to address the key issues raised in the survey and form several concise messages to present to the public during the coming months of informational outreach. These messages should be designed to further inform the public that without additional revenue the District will have to make personnel cuts to fire protection and emergency services and about the reasons for the need for more revenue.

It is vital to focus on the basic message that the fire protection and emergency medical services that a new measure would fund are the fundamental services currently expected by the community. Having a local 24-7 fire district, with local funding that could not be taken by the State, and prevention to personnel cuts are the top priorities of the community based on survey responses. A number of comments also showed awareness surrounding the increase to insurance premiums if the ISO rating was to decrease and this messaging should be addressed in the outreach campaign.

ESTABLISH STRONG FISCAL CONTROLS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This measure must include strong fiscal controls and accountability provisions. Registered voters and all other members of the community must be educated to understand that all revenues will be spent within the District for fire protection and emergency medical related services. In addition, the District's budgets will be audited annually, government processes will be transparent and incorporate citizen input, etc. You have a very educated group of voters in your community and survey comments showed some would be more likely to support the measure if they had additional on how the funds will be spent.

EMPHASIZE THAT ALL FUNDS RAISED WILL BE USED LOCALLY

The District should include in all messaging a statement that all the funds raised by this special tax will be used for services and projects in the District, and that none of the money raised can be appropriated by the City, County or the State.

USE MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA AS CONDUIT

Work with local media including local newspapers (e.g., local weekly publications), as well as social media, including Facebook, Instagram, e-mail lists, and Nextdoor.com to raise community awareness of the proposed services. The message to the media should be consistent with the main message summarized previously.

INVOLVE COMMUNITY LEADERS

Identify important community leaders and enlist them to assist with the planning and outreach efforts.

INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Community stakeholders are those who may benefit most significantly by maintaining the current level of fire protection and emergency rescue services. These stakeholders could include homeowners' associations, schools, and service organizations.

Consider ways to include senior groups and the senior community in general in your outreach. This group is not only very sensitive to the services the District provides, but the survey analysis shows, the 65-99 age group is the only age group to support these above the needed 66.7% support.

MOST EFFECTIVE OUTREACH MECHANISM FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

The best way to enlist support from your constituents is via face to face, one on one communication from a known, credible source. Human contact is by far a much more effective way to communicate than fliers, mailers, or yard signs. This can be a challenge for some parts of the District that are more rural or where the homes are farther apart and walking a neighborhood is not feasible.

Consider the following ideas that have been successful in other Districts, when planning your local community outreach: pancake breakfast or any other special events, tabling at local supermarkets, neighborhood groups, neighborhood watch groups, any type of community meetings, senior center events, smoke detector inspections, have coffee with your firefighter, Nextdoor.com, e-mail lists from known friends and/or community members, etc. While this outreach is not expensive, it is time consuming and requires organization, coordination, message discipline and volunteer commitment. This messaging and commitment becomes even more critical when there is a time sensitivity in the upcoming election.

FINAL THOUGHTS AND MACRO-LEVEL FACTORS

The community support is currently at 63.8%, and accordingly, an additional 2.9%+ of support is need for a successful outcome. These results also include a margin of error of 3.87%. The necessary increase may seem minimal, but it will require a strong committed outreach campaign and does not take into account any formal opposition that may arise during the outreach campaign.

In fact, the combination of the proposed rate modifications and community outreach approaches discussed above may still not be sufficient to achieve a successful ballot outcome in the near future and the District should also consider later election options. We anticipate macro-level changes such as continued property value increases, as well as economic improvements and increased optimism on the national level will drive support levels upward.

Therefore, it is the recommendation that the District should cautiously consider a tax rate closer to \$45 per single family home with a lowered commercial (including agricultural parcels over 1 acre) rate below \$200, without an annual rate adjustment associated with a consumer price index, and should consider including a sunset period of five years. The District should also engage in sustained, authentic, and clear community engagement, and should track other local and national trends in efforts to increase support for these essential and desired services.