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TO: Tess Lengyel, Alameda CTC
FROM: Alex Evans and Sara LaBatt
DATE: September 21, 2011
RE: Comments on TEP questionnaire draft from CAWG & TAWG

This memorandum summarizes comments from CAWG and TAWG on the survey questionnaire draft for the Alameda County Transportation Expenditure Plan update. The TAWG met on September 8, 2011, with Alex Evans from EMC Research in attendance. The CAWG met on September 15, 2011, with Sara LaBatt from EMC Research in attendance. Some comments were also received via email.

Survey overview

The purpose of this survey is to measure voter reaction to a ballot question related to an updated transportation expenditure plan, with testing of potential plan projects and messaging. This is the second survey on this topic, and is designed to give the Alameda CTC reaction to two ballot scenarios:

1. Augment and extend in perpetuity the existing Measure B, with an updated and expanded TEP.
2. Augment only, with a new permanent sales tax and related TEP.

A split-sample methodology is employed to ensure a fair and representative testing of each of the two ballot scenarios above, without risk of confusion or question order effect between the two measure types. Under this methodology, a randomly selected half of the sample is asked about the first ballot scenario, and the remainder of the sample is asked about the second ballot scenario.

The questionnaire structure is divided into the following sections:

1. Introductory section (questions 1-5)
2. Initial vote section (questions 6-7)
3. TEP and ballot measure elements (questions 8-17)
4. Second vote section (question 18)
5. Degree of support for specific projects and programs (questions 19-41)
6. Final vote section (questions 50-54)
7. Voter profile and demographics (questions 55-60)

Comments

General:

- Concern that the survey is too long & will take longer than 18 minutes.
- Concern about the level of jargon & language being used. Respondents may be confused or intimidated by "expenditure plan" or other similar language.

- Survey should include questions related to the vision statement, and reaction to the vision statement.
- Would like more on values and vision – more like the first poll.
 - How much do people value alternatives to driving?
 - How important are air quality, health, climate change?
 - Do people want to have to drive? Or want to have to BART?
 - What do you want to change in your own habits?
- Can there be a section about how people are affected by rising transit costs?
- Can we ask their own goals for transportation over the next 10-20 years: Reduce commute time? Increase choices of modes? Reduce costs?
- Concern that there's no "what's in it for me?"
- Breakout of interviews by language can show we are responsive to Title VI.

1. *Introductory section (questions 1-5)*

- Introduction should point out that we are asking about a ballot measure, and that the anticipated length of the interview.
- Is it necessary to use the name of the research company in the introduction – concerned about wasting respondent time.

2. *Initial vote section (questions 6-7)*

- Questions 6 & 7 should read "would you be likely" as opposed to "are you likely"
- Some confusion about the difference between ballot measures represented in questions 6 & 7. Not clear that question 7 does not affect Measure B.
- I couldn't figure out question 7 until I figured out 54. Respondents obviously won't have this option. Many of them are likely to say 'huh? Isn't there already such a tax?' As I recall, another member of the CAWG said the existing wording was almost disingenuous; I agree. Question 7 should read "authorizes an additional ½ cent..."
- Should we talk about filling potholes and repaving streets in the ballot questions?

3. *TEP and ballot measure elements (questions 8-17)*

- Many questions in this section are confusing and too wordy.
- Can we make language simpler?
- Should question 8 include something about seniors and/or paratransit?
- Question 14 should read "authorizes an additional ½ cent..."

4. *Second vote section (question 18)*

- Question 18 should read "would you be likely" as opposed to "are you likely"

5. *Degree of support for specific projects and programs (questions 19-41)*

- The objective here is to help ACTC decide which programs and projects to include in the ballot measure, but these questions will not do that. They are all superficially attractive (especially since

many of them are sugar-coated with loaded language such as “more effective,” “essential,” “critical funding,” etc.). Since they will not be told that the number of projects and programs implemented will be limited by available funding, the vast majority of poll respondents are likely to say “sounds good to me” and give the same “support” response to all the items. The likelihood of having such responses will increase even more as one goes down the 31-item list, of course.

- What is the point of spending most of the interview time testing messages more than a year before the election? Wouldn't it be more useful to have help deciding what to put on the ballot?
- Should question 40 say “allows BART to run directly from Dublin/Pleasanton to San Jose?”
- Question suggestion: “This measure will modernize 40-year old BART stations to sustainably improve reliability, performance and comfort” or “this measure will modernize our local BART stations to sustainably improve reliability, performance and comfort.”
- Question 41:
 - This measure encourages transit use by the next generation and substantial aid to getting to school safely by providing middle and high school students in the county with a transit pass.
 - This measure will help reduce both congestion and greenhouse gases, and promote safe routes to schools and educational opportunities by providing all middle and high school students in the county with a transit pass.

6. *Final vote section (questions 50-54)*

- Questions 51, 52, 53 should read “would you be likely” as opposed to “are you likely”
- Question 52 should read “authorizes an additional ½ cent...”
- Questions 51 & 53 should read “and what if the increase was ¼ cent...”

7. *Voter profile and demographics (questions 55-60)*

- No comments on this section