Alameda County TEP Update
Fall 2011 Survey

Questionnaire revisions document
September 22, 2011

EMC Research, Inc.
436 14th Street, Suite 820
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 844-0680
EMC #08-3893

DRAFT

Study Objective

Measure voter reaction to a ½ cent increase in the transportation sales tax, using two mechanisms
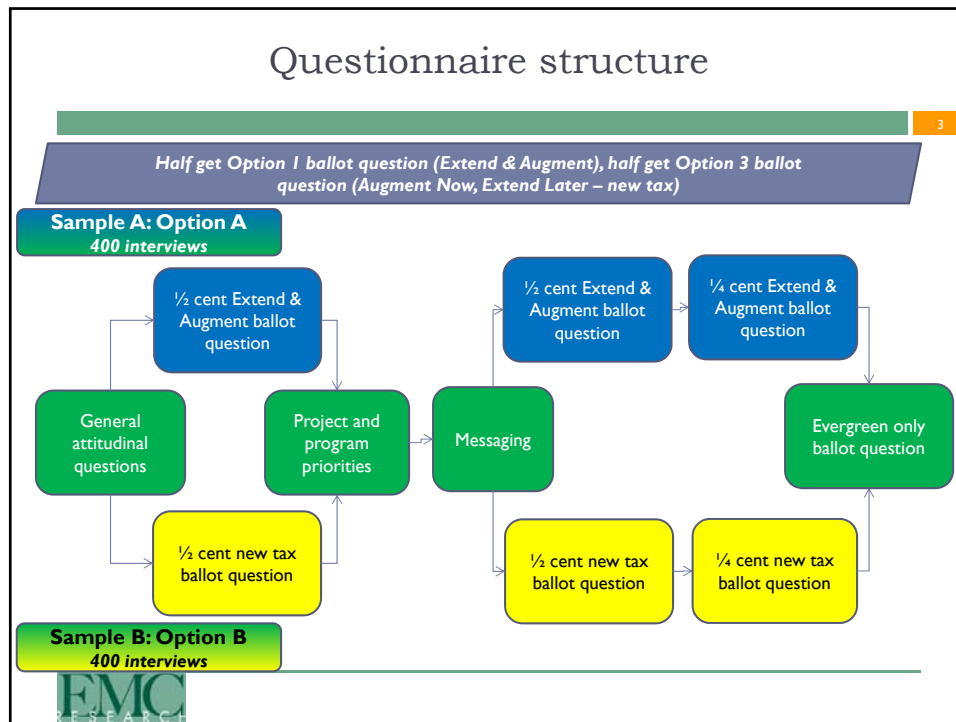
Option A: Extend and Augment
- *This measure amends the existing Measure B*
- Make existing ½ cent permanent
- Add another ½ cent
- Expenditure plan is for new ½ cent now, then for full cent after current Measure B expiration date

Option B: Augment Only
- *This measure establishes a new tax separate from Measure B*
- Establishes a new ½ cent permanent sales tax measure
- Expenditure plan is only for new ½ cent
- Go back to ballot later to extend Measure B

Questionnaire structure

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> *Half get Option 1 ballot question (Extend & Augment), half get Option 3 ballot question (Augment Now, Extend Later – new tax)*

Sample A: Option A
400 interviews

- ½ cent Extend & Augment ballot question
- General attitudinal questions
- Project and program priorities
- Messaging
- ½ cent Extend & Augment ballot question
- ¼ cent Extend & Augment ballot question
- Evergreen only ballot question
- ½ cent new tax ballot question
- ½ cent new tax ballot question
- ¼ cent new tax ballot question

Sample B: Option B
400 interviews

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Questionnaire Comments Received

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- ▶ Initial questionnaire draft reviewed by Alameda CTC staff and the TEP consultant team; edits incorporated into draft questionnaire for review by TAWG and CAWG.
- ▶ Draft was distributed to both committees; comments collected by email and at meetings on 9/8 (TAWG) and 9/15 (CAWG).
- ▶ Summary of TAWG & CAWG comments follows, along with EMC recommendations.

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Questionnaire Structure

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▸ The questionnaire is divided into the following sections. Comments are grouped by section.

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)

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General Comments

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▸ Length of the survey is a concern – may take longer than the 18 minutes allotted.

▸ Complexity of language – will respondents be confused by terminology?

▸ Should the survey include questions related to values and vision? Such as:
  ▸ Reaction to vision statement.
  ▸ 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 are your personal goals for transportation over the next 10-20 years? (Commute time reduction, increase in choices of mode, cost reduction, etc.)
  ▸ How are you affected by rising transit costs?

▸ Breakout of interviews by language can show we are responsive to Title VI.

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1. Introductory Section (questions 1-5)

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▸ Should respondents be given more information about what we are asking about and how long the interview will take to encourage them to stay on the phone and complete the interview?

▸ Is it necessary to use the name of the research company in the introduction? Concerned about wasting respondent time.

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2. Initial Vote Section (questions 6-7)

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▸ Should questions 6 & 7 read "would you be likely" as opposed to "are you likely"

▸ Confusion about the difference between the ballot measures represented in questions 6 & 7. Not clear that question 7 does not affect Measure B.

▸ Question 7 is not clear until you get to the end of the survey. Respondents obviously won't have this option. Many will be confused because they know about current tax?

▸ Wording of question 7 is disingenuous. Question 7 should read "authorizes an additional ½ cent…" "

▸ Should we talk about filling potholes and repaving streets in the ballot questions?

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3. TEP and Ballot Measure Elements (questions 8-17)

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‣ Questions in this section are confusing and too wordy. Can we make language simpler?

‣ Should question 8 include something about seniors and/or paratransit?

‣ Should question 14 read "authorizes an additional ½ cent…"

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4. Second Vote Question (question 18)

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‣ Should question 18 read "would you be likely" as opposed to "are you likely"

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5. Degree of Support for Specific Projects and Programs (questions 19-41)

‣ These questions won't achieve objective of helping ACTC decide which programs and projects to include the in the ballot measure. Wording is superficially attractive .

‣ Since respondents will not be told that the what is implemented will be limited by available funding, majority are likely to give the same "support" response to all the items.

‣ Length of list makes it hard to differentiate responses – they will just say "support" to get through it.

‣ 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?

Comments on this section continued on next page

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5. Degree of Support for Specific Projects and Programs (questions 19-41) *(continued)*

‣ Should question 40 say "allows BART to run directly from Dublin/ Pleasanton to San Jose?

‣ Additional question suggestions:
  ‣ This measure will modernize 40-year old BART stations to sustainably improve reliability, performance and comfort
  ‣ 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.

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6. Final Vote Section (questions 50-54)

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▸ Should questions 51, 52, 53 read "would you be likely" as opposed to "are you likely"

▸ Should question 52 read "authorizes an additional ½ cent…"

▸ Should questions 51 & 53 read "and what if the increase was ¼ cent…"

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7. Voter Profile and Demographics (questions 55-60)

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▸ No comments on this section.

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EMC Research Response to Concerns

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‣ The length of the survey is within the scope and not unduly burdensome on respondents.

‣ At attempt can be made to revise some of the language to be less intimidating, however the term "expenditure plan" is likely to be included in the ballot measure itself.

‣ There is not time in this survey for an extended section on vision and values. Respondents' priorities for transportation improvements and general direction can be taken from a variety of questions already in the survey, including questions 5, 8-11, and much of questions 19-41.

‣ The construct "…are you likely to vote yes…or no…" in the ballot questions is proven language that encourages a yes or no answer. We aren't asking them how they think they will vote in the future, but rather their vote today.

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EMC Research Response to Concerns

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‣ The Sample A track tests an increase to the existing tax, while the Sample B track tests an entirely separate tax measure not connected to what they are currently paying. Either option could potentially be on the ballot, with language much like what is currently in the poll, and the poll is designed to test both approaches. Sample A already tests the 'increase' approach, so including it in Sample B would only confound the results and essentially eliminate the differentiation between the two possible ballot measures.

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EMC Research Response to Concerns

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▸ On questions 19-41:

  ▸ Remember that this survey is only one element of the design of the TEP and the ballot measure, and while it is an important component, it should not drive the final design. Good transportation planning and input from CAWG, TAWG, elected officials, and members of the community are important considerations when designing the plan.

  ▸ This measure asks voters for <u>more</u>, and we need 2/3 of them to agree to give it to us, or we don't get it. This section will serve both to allow us to differentiate between the projects and programs that are more or less important to the voting public, as well as measure potential quantifiable support for the measure based on the inclusion of particular elements in a way that is designed to attract.

  ▸ There is room here to expand the scale to allow a wider range of responses to this set of questions. We propose a 1-7 scale, where 1 means they are much more likely to oppose the measure based on inclusion of the element, and 7 means they are much more likely to support the measure based on inclusion of the element. This will give us more ability to differentiate the relative levels of importance of the various projects and programs.

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Survey Timeline

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▸ August 26-31: Draft questionnaire & circulate with team for review and edit.

▸ September 1: Draft questionnaire ready for distribution and public review.

▸ September 22: Questionnaire review and conditional approval by Steering Committee.

▸ September 23: Questionnaire instrument finalized.

▸ September 26 – October 6: Survey pre-test and field period.

▸ October 27: Presentation of results to Steering Committee.

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