

# ***Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates***

*Opinion Research &  
Public Policy Analysis*

TO: Interested parties

FROM: Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates

RE: Results of Community Survey on Potential Revenue-Generating Ballot Initiatives

DATE: December 20, 2005

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**Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates (FMMA) recently completed two voter opinion surveys in Long Beach to assess opinions about potential ballot initiatives to increase funding for public safety services and library services<sup>1</sup>.**

## **FINDINGS**

### ***The library measure***

- **The survey results show that Long Beach voters value their local libraries and support providing additional funding to restore and enhance library services. There is solid support for a ballot measure that would increase the parcel tax by 35 dollars annually to provide additional funds for Long Beach City Library operations.** Three out of four (73%) voters said they would vote “yes” on such a ballot measure, which would restore library operating hours, upgrade technology, buy books, and provide literacy, children’s reading, and after-school programs. Figure 1 illustrates the results.

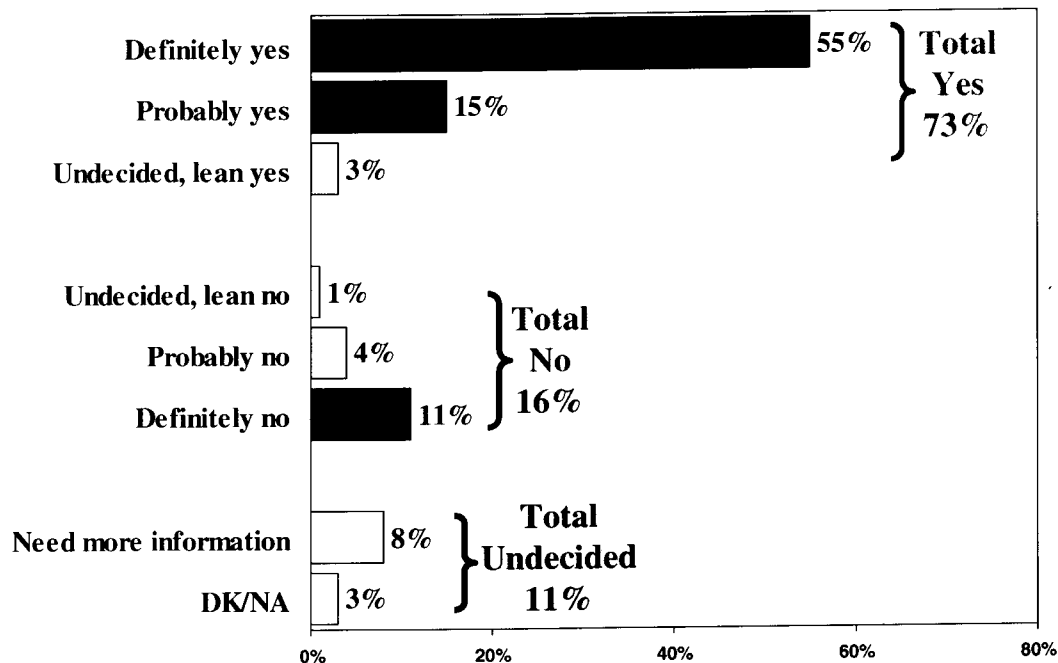
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<sup>1</sup> Between October 16 and 19, 2006, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates (FMM&A) conducted telephone interviews with 800 randomly selected registered voters in the City of Long Beach. The margin of error for the survey as a whole is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. Between November 15 and 17, 2005, FMM&A conducted telephone interviews with an additional 600 randomly selected registered voters in the City of Long Beach. The margin of error for the survey as a whole is plus or minus 4.1 percentage points. The margin of error for split-sampled questions is 5.7 percentage points.

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**FIGURE 1: SUPPORT FOR A LIBRARY MEASURE**



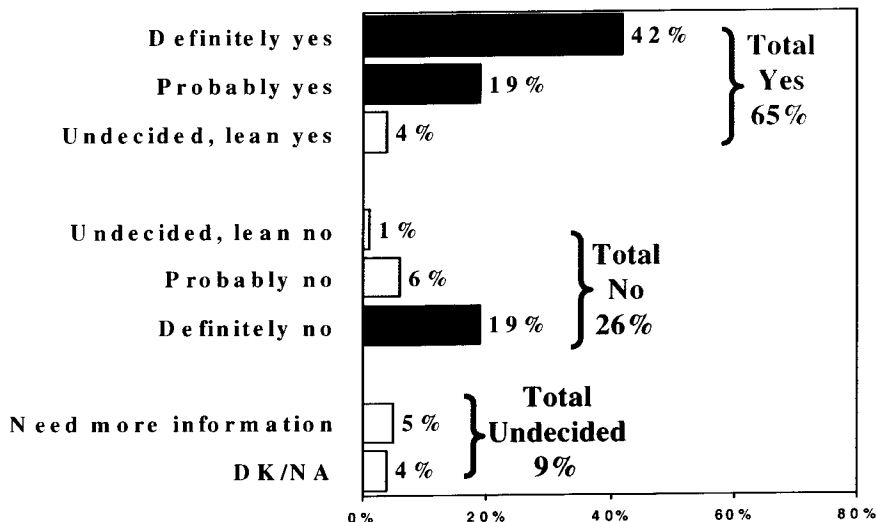
- Support for the library measure is broad-based, with the measure receiving support from seven in ten voters or more regardless of gender, homeowner status, education, age, race or ethnicity, and income.
- When asked to evaluate how important it is to add funds for each item on an extensive list of library services, nearly six out of ten or more considered it to be very important to add funds for each item, including restoring neighborhood and main library hours, repairing and replacing computers and equipment, providing programs to help families and adults learn to read, preventing cuts in children's reading programs, restoring and increasing the book buying budget, and preventing reductions in existing library youth programs.

***The public safety measure***

- The survey results show that, if the election were held today, nearly the requisite two-thirds of Long Beach voters would support a ballot measure to increase the sales tax by one-half cent to generate revenue for public safety services in Long Beach. Nevertheless, as of the date of the survey, the measure falls short of the two-thirds support needed for voter approval. Figure 2 illustrates the results.

- Like the library measure, the public safety measure receives far-reaching support, generating support from six out of ten or more voters in each major subgroup analyzed, regardless of political party affiliation, political ideology, age, race or ethnicity, income, education, or gender.

**FIGURE 2: INITIAL SUPPORT FOR A PUBLIC SAFETY MEASURE**



- When asked to evaluate how important it is to add funds for a number of public safety services, nearly half or more voters considered it to be very important to add funds for each item named, including hiring more police officers, expanding neighborhood-based policing, improving 911 response times, expanding anti-gang programs, monitoring registered sex offenders living in Long Beach, and improving the ability of the City to respond quickly to a terrorist attack.
- Support increased during the course of the survey as voters heard statements and information in favor of this potential ballot measure. After hearing these statements, seven out of ten voters said they would vote “yes” on a public safety measure.
- Support for both the library and public safety measures reflects strongly favorable views of the current Long Beach City Library system and the City’s public safety services, as well as a desire to sustain and enhance these services.
  - Three out of four (74%) voters have a favorable impression of the Long Beach Public library. Just four percent have an unfavorable view view.

- Fifty-five percent (55%) of voters believe *the availability of library services* presents a serious problem for Long Beach residents. Moreover, 43 percent of voters believe “too little” money is spent on library services.
  - Nearly eight out of ten voters (78%) give the Long Beach Police Department a favorable rating. Just seven percent have an unfavorable view.
  - While voters hold the Long Beach Police Department in high regard, nine out of ten (90%) voters said *crime of all sorts, including gangs, graffiti, and drug abuse*, is a serious problem – making it the top issue tested.
  - Four out of ten voters (41%) said they believe too little money is spent on police services.
- **Support for both measures also reflects the belief that *the City of Long Beach needs additional funds to provide the level of city services that residents need and want*. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of voters agree with this statement. Moreover, 75 percent of voters believe *state budget cuts that reduce the money available to cities for essential services such as police* are a serious problem.**

**These findings suggest that both a public safety measure and a library measure can obtain the two-thirds majority of voters needed for passage.**