



TO City of Orinda
FROM Dave Metz and Miranda Everitt
FM3 Research
RE: Orinda Survey Results
DATE March 3, 2020

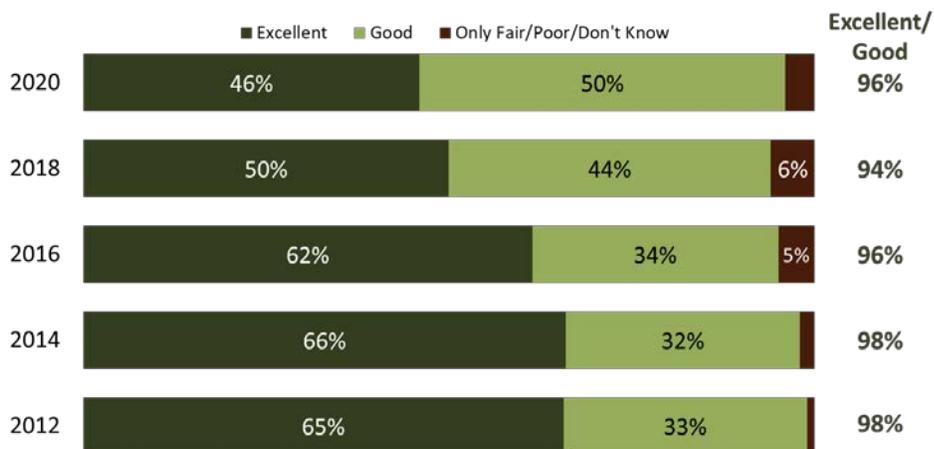
Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a survey of Orinda voters likely to participate in the November 2020 election.¹ The study found that a one-cent, general-purpose sales tax for the City of Orinda appears viable for this November's election, with broad majority support; wildfire prevention, emergency response and road repairs are high priorities for investment from such a measure. Orinda continues to be widely regarded as an excellent place to live, and voters express satisfaction with the delivery of City services. Investments in local streets and roads have been visible, but voters feel there is more work to be done. The public/private roads issue is divisive.

Key specific findings of the survey include:

- **Perceptions of Orinda's quality of life are very positive, though intensity has eroded over time.** Orinda voters offer nearly universally positive ratings, with 96% calling life there "excellent" or "good." However, the share who give the highest rating of "excellent" has declined in the last few years to below a majority.

Figure 1: Quality of Life Rating

Would you say that the overall quality of life in Orinda is excellent, good, only fair, or poor?



- Voters continue to express satisfaction with the City’s delivery of services.** More than two in five (44%) give the city "excellent" or "above average" ratings for service delivery, and fully 85% say those services are at least "average." This is fairly consistent with ratings over the last several years.

Figure 2: Orinda Voter Perceptions of City Service Delivery

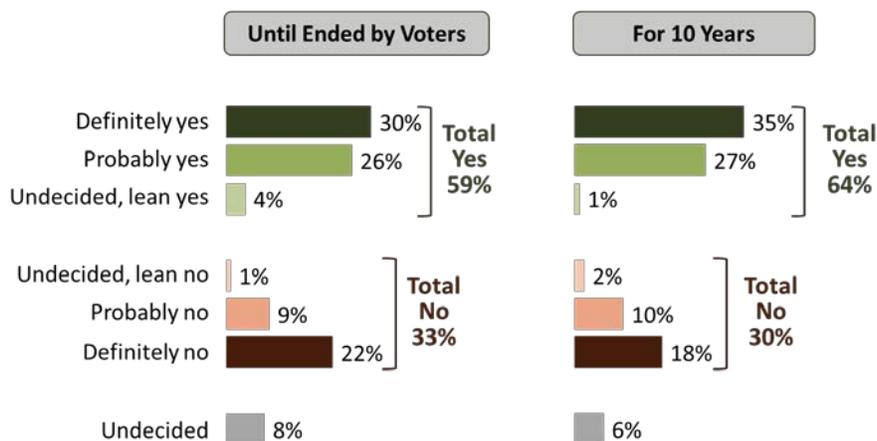
Overall, how would you rate the job being done by the City of Orinda in providing basic services and taking care of the needs of Orinda residents? Would you say the City of Orinda is doing an excellent job, above average job, average job, below average job, or poor job?



- Strong majorities of voters support a general-purpose sales tax measure, with slightly more intensity behind one that sunsets after 10 years.** As shown in Figure 3, nearly three in five (59%) support an ongoing one-cent general purpose sales tax; nearly two-thirds (64%) support the measure that sunsets after 10 years. In either case, more voters say they would "definitely" vote yes than even softly oppose a measure, and fewer than one in ten are undecided.

Figure 3: Support for a One-Cent Sales Tax Measure

Orinda Essential City Services Measure. To help maintain essential City services, including: ongoing repairs/ maintenance to public roads and storm drains; restoring wildlife habitat and recreation along San Pablo Creek; emergency/ natural disaster preparedness, including wildfire prevention/ evacuation planning; shall the City of Orinda renew the existing half-cent sales tax and increase it by half-cent, providing \$2.4 million annually (HALF SAMPLE: until ended by voters) (HALF SAMPLE: for 10 years), with financial audits and a citizens oversight committee?



- **Most voters rate speedy emergency response and wildfire prevention as “extremely important” priorities for investment of funds from such a measure.** As shown in Figure 4 below, very broad majorities also call basic infrastructure repairs “extremely” or “very important.”

Figure 4: Top Investment Priorities

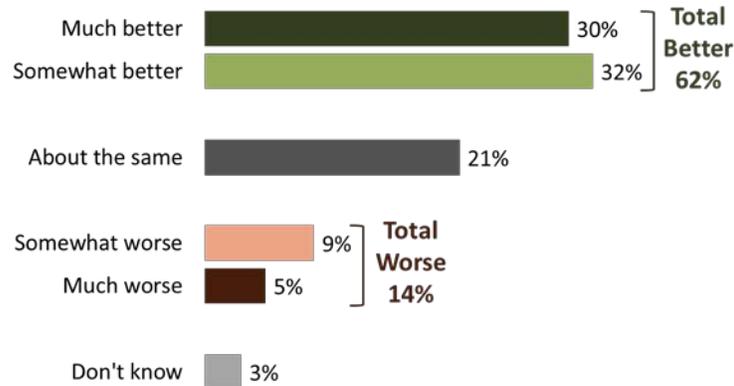
I am going to read you a list of specific City projects and services that could be funded by the measure. Recognizing that there will not be enough funding to complete all of these projects, please tell me how important each one is to you: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important.

Priority	% Extremely Important	% Extremely/Very Important
Ensuring speedy emergency response	54%	89%
Wildfire prevention	55%	86%
Repairing collapsing storm drains	38%	83%
Repaving public streets that are in poor condition	32%	79%
Fully investing in the maintenance of public roads to minimize future costly repairs	33%	78%
Repaving major City streets	27%	78%
Preparing for natural disasters	41%	76%
Replacing failing storm drains to prevent road flooding	29%	76%
Maintaining vital City services	29%	76%
Repairing public storm drains at the same time the roads are repaired	32%	75%

- **At the same time, three in five believe streets and roads have gotten better over the last few years.** Fully 62% of Orinda voters believe the overall quality of public streets and roads in the City has gotten better, and 30% say it is “much better” (as shown in Figure 5 on the next page). Paired with the high priority voters continue to assign to repaving local streets and roads, these findings indicate that voters clearly see progress, but also more work to be done in this area.

Figure 5: Perception of Changes in Road Quality

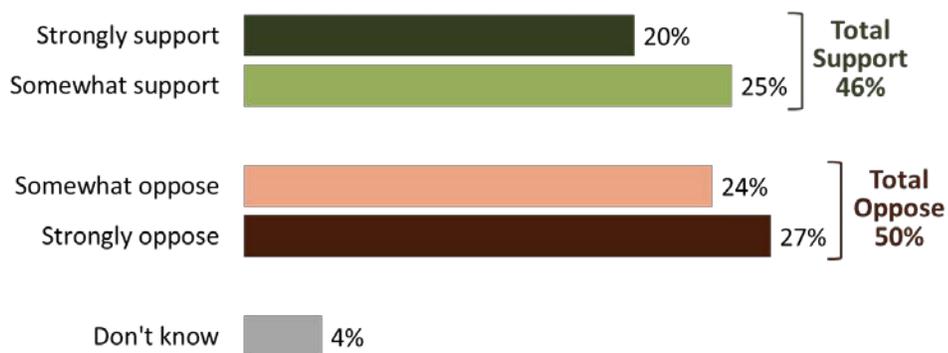
In the last few years would you say that the overall quality of public streets and roads in the City of Orinda has gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?



- Voters are divided on the concept of a measure to repair and accept ownership of private roads.** Given a brief description of the concept of a ballot measure to generate funding to repair roads that are currently privately owned, Orinda voters oppose it by a narrow margin (just four points). Notably, opponents of the idea are more likely to feel strongly (27% "strongly oppose") than are supporters (20% "strongly support.")

Figure 6: Support for a Measure to Repair and Accept Ownership of Private Roads

As you may know, about 30 miles of Orinda roads are privately-owned. These roads are not maintained by the City. Most of these roads do not have gates that physically restrict access to the general public. All local residents, including those living on these privately-owned roads, pay existing City taxes that fund repairs to public roads. The City is considering a ballot measure that would generate funding to repair and accept ownership of private roads into the City's publicly-maintained road system. Does this sound like something you would support or oppose?



Voters next heard a brief, balanced exchange of pros and cons on the idea, which did little to shift overall patterns of support. Forty-five percent support the proposal and 50% oppose it. Providing the context of an estimated cost ("current estimates range from \$5 million to \$25 million") increased opposition to 58%.

In sum, Orinda voters are largely pleased with their quality of life and the City's delivery of services. They see improvements in road repairs, but nonetheless back increased investment in improvements (as well as in natural disaster preparedness and public safety) through an increase in the City's sales tax. There does not appear to be a broad appetite to accept ownership of the City's private roads into the publicly-maintained road system.

ⁱ **Methodology:** From Jan. 31-Feb. 6, 2020, FM3 conducted 436 telephone (cell and landline) and online interviews with registered voters in Orinda likely to participate in the November 2020 election. The margin of sampling error is +/-4.9% at the 95% confidence interval. Due to rounding, some percentages do not add up to 100.