



FIRE TAX SURVEY
SUMMARY REPORT

PREPARED FOR THE
CITY OF BELVEDERE



JULY 2023



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INTRODUCTION

Located in Marin County just north of the Golden Gate Bridge, the City of Belvedere is a small community (less than one square mile in size) surrounded on three sides by the waters of San Francisco Bay. Incorporated in 1896 and currently home to 2,126 residents,¹ the City's team of full- and part-time employees provides a full suite of municipal services either directly or via contract with other agencies and providers.

Since 1980, the City of Belvedere has contracted with the Tiburon Fire Protection District (TFPD) for fire protection, emergency medical (EMS), and ambulatory services. Not being a member of the District, the City is charged an annual fee that is based on TFPD budgeted expenditures, apportioned according to the number of occupancies in the City and other jurisdictions. Although voters approved a fire tax in 1980 to pay for this transition to full-time professional fire protection and EMS services, over time the annual fee charged by TFPD has increased much faster than the escalation of the fire tax such that the tax currently covers just *half* of the cost of services. In order to fund the balance of fire protection and EMS services, the City has been forced to cut other service areas including police protection and street maintenance.

MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH The primary purpose of the study detailed in this report was to produce an unbiased, *statistically reliable* evaluation of voters' interest in increasing the fire tax to cover the full costs of fire protection, EMS, and ambulatory services in Belvedere, which would also help avoid additional cuts to police, street maintenance, and other services. Moreover, should the City decide to move forward with a measure, the survey data can guide how best to structure the measure so it is consistent with the community's priorities and expressed needs. Specifically, the study was designed to:

- Gauge current, *baseline* support for increasing the fire tax to fund fire protection, emergency medical, and ambulatory services;
- Identify the types of services that voters are most interested in funding, should the measure pass;
- Expose voters to arguments in favor of, and against, the proposed tax measure to assess how information affects support for the measure; and
- Estimate support for the measure once voters are presented with the types of information they will likely be exposed to during an election cycle.

It is important to note at the outset that voters' opinions about tax measures are often somewhat fluid, especially when the amount of information they initially have about a measure is limited. How voters think and feel about a measure today may not be the same way they think and feel once they have had a chance to hear more information about the measure during the election cycle. Accordingly, to accurately assess the feasibility of increasing the fire tax to cover the full cost of services, it was important that in addition to measuring *current* opinions about a measure (Question 5), the survey expose respondents to the types of information voters are likely to encounter during an election cycle, including arguments in favor of (Question 9) and opposed to (Question 12) the measure, and gauge how this type of information ultimately impacts their voting decision (Questions 10 & 13).

1. Source: US Decennial Census, 2020.

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY For a full discussion of the research methods and techniques used in this study, turn to *Methodology* on page 28. In brief, the survey was administered to a random sample of 261 voters in the City of Belvedere who are likely to participate in the November 2024 general election, with a subset who are also likely to participate in the March 2024 primary election. The survey followed a mixed-method design that employed multiple recruiting methods (mail, email, text, and telephone) and multiple data collection methods (telephone and online). Administered between July 5 and July 19, 2023, the average interview lasted 16 minutes.

ORGANIZATION OF REPORT This report is designed to meet the needs of readers who prefer a summary of the findings as well as those who are interested in the details of the results. For those who seek an overview of the findings, the section titled *Key Findings* is for you. It provides a summary of the most important findings of the survey and a discussion of their implications. For the interested reader, this section is followed by a more detailed question-by-question discussion of the results from the survey by topic area (see *Table of Contents*), as well as a description of the methodology employed for collecting and analyzing the data. And, for the truly ambitious reader, the questionnaire used for the interviews is contained at the back of this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 31) and a complete set of crosstabulations for the survey results is contained in Appendix A.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS True North thanks the City of Belvedere for the opportunity to assist in this important effort. The collective expertise, local knowledge, and insight provided by District staff and representatives improved the overall quality of the research presented here. A special thanks also to Charles Heath (TeamCivX) for contributing to the design of the study.

DISCLAIMER The statements and conclusions in this report are those of the authors (Dr. Timothy McLarney and Richard Sarles) at True North Research, Inc. and not necessarily those of the City of Belvedere. Any errors and omissions are the responsibility of the authors.

ABOUT TRUE NORTH True North is a full-service survey research firm that is dedicated to providing public agencies with a clear understanding of the values, perceptions, priorities, and concerns of their residents and voters. Through designing and implementing scientific surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews as well as expert interpretation of the findings, True North helps its clients to move with confidence when making strategic decisions in a variety of areas—such as planning, policy evaluation, performance management, establishing fiscal priorities, passing revenue measures, and developing effective public information campaigns.

During their careers, Dr. McLarney and Mr. Sarles have designed and conducted over 1,200 survey research studies for public agencies, including more than 400 revenue measure feasibility studies. Of the measures that have gone to ballot based on Dr. McLarney's recommendation, 95% have been successful. In total, the research that Dr. McLarney has conducted has led to over \$35 billion in successful local revenue measures.



KEY FINDINGS

As noted in the *Introduction*, this study was designed to provide the City of Belvedere with a statistically reliable understanding of voters' interest in increasing funding for fire protection, EMS, and ambulatory services through a local revenue measure. Whereas subsequent sections of this report are devoted to conveying the detailed results of the survey, in this section we attempt to 'see the forest through the trees' and note how the collective results of the survey answer some of the key questions that motivated the research. The following conclusions are based on True North's and TeamCivX's interpretations of the survey results and the firms' collective experience conducting revenue measure studies for public agencies throughout the State.

Is there sufficient support for the proposed fire tax measure?

Voters in the City of Belvedere have a high opinion of the quality of life in the community, as well as the City's performance in providing municipal services. When it comes to funding fire protection and fire prevention services, emergency medical and paramedic services, and 24-hour ambulance services, however, voters' current interest in these services is in direct tension with their sensitivity to raising local taxes.

The survey results indicate that although many voters value fire protection, EMS, and ambulatory services, support for increasing the fire tax to fully fund these services currently falls well short of the two-thirds supermajority required for passage of a special tax in California. Depending on the tax rate being considered (the survey tested a range from \$498 to \$980 per residential unit) and the amount of information a respondent had about the measure, support for the proposed fire tax ranged from a low of 38% to a high of 48% throughout the survey.

There are a number of conditions that appear to factor into this result, including a high degree of tax rate sensitivity among voters at the rates being considered for the measure, and particularly low levels of support for the measure among key subgroups based on age and party affiliation. Of course, concerns about inflation/cost of living are also baked into the survey results, which creates an environment that is a bit more challenging than it would be otherwise.

How does the tax rate affect support for the measure?

Naturally, the willingness of voters to support a specific revenue measure is contingent, in part, on the tax rate associated with a measure. The higher the rate, all other things being equal, the lower the level of aggregate support that can be expected. It is critical that the rate be set at a level that the necessary proportion of voters view as affordable.

One of the clear patterns in the survey data is that some Belvedere voters are price sensitive with respect to the proposed fire tax measure. When their attention was focused on the tax rate (see *Tax Threshold* on page 12), support for the measure at a rate of \$980 per residential unit, per year, was found among just 38% of voters surveyed. Reducing the tax rate resulted in modest increases in support for the measure, although

even when the tax rate was reduced to \$498 per year, support for the fire tax was still shy of a majority (48%) and well below the required two-thirds threshold.

Choosing the appropriate tax rate is likely to be the most difficult decision the City will have to make with respect to the proposed measure. The higher the rate, the greater the risk that the measure fails to achieve the two-thirds supermajority required for passage. The lower the rate, the less funding the City will receive to pay for fire protection, EMS, and ambulatory services. True North and TeamCivX look forward to continuing this conversation with the City with the goal of finding a rate that strikes the right balance given the City's needs *and* the political challenges facing a measure.

What programs and services do voters identify as priorities for funding?

One of the goals of this study was to identify voters' preferences with respect to how the proceeds of a successful measure should be spent. This information can be used to ensure that the expenditure plan for the proposed fire tax is well-aligned with voters' priorities.

Most of the programs and services tested were popular with Belvedere voters. That said, the services that were favored by the *largest* percentage of respondents were providing emergency medical, paramedic, and ambulance services 24-hours per day (72% strongly or somewhat favor), replacing outdated fire-fighting and life-saving equipment and supplies (70%), providing quick responses to 911 emergencies (70%), providing fire protection and prevention services 24-hours per day (70%), and providing emergency communications and dispatch (65%).

How might a public information campaign affect support for the proposed measure?

As noted in the body of this report, individuals' opinions about revenue measures are often not rigid, especially when the amount of information presented to the public on a measure has been limited. Thus, in addition to measuring current support for the measure, one of the goals of this study was to explore how the introduction of additional information about the measure may affect voters' opinions about the proposal.

It is clear from the survey results that voters' opinions about the proposed fire tax measure are somewhat sensitive to the nature, and amount, of information they have about the measure. Information about the specific services that would be funded by the measure, as well as arguments in favor of the measure, were found by some voters to be compelling reasons to support the measure. That said, voters also exhibited some sensitivity to opposition arguments, and there is a risk they could be swayed by divisive and/or hyper-partisan campaigning during the 2024 election cycle. Accordingly, if the City chooses to pursue a measure, one of the keys to building and sustaining support will be the presence of an effective, well-organized public outreach effort and a sep-

arate, independent campaign that focuses on the need for the measure as well as the many benefits that it will bring.

QUALITY OF LIFE & CITY SERVICES

The opening section of the survey was designed to gauge voters' opinions regarding the quality of life in Belvedere, their ideas for how it can be improved, as well as their assessment of the City's performance in providing municipal services.

QUALITY OF LIFE At the outset of the interview, voters were asked to rate the quality of life in the City of Belvedere using a five-point scale of excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor. As shown in Figure 1 below, nearly all voters shared favorable opinions of the quality of life in Belvedere, with 77% reporting it is excellent and 20% stating it is good. Approximately 2% of voters surveyed said the quality of life in the City is fair, whereas no respondents used poor or very poor to describe the quality of life in Belvedere and less than 1% were unwilling to answer the question.

Question 2 *How would you rate the overall quality of life in Belvedere? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?*

FIGURE 1 QUALITY OF LIFE

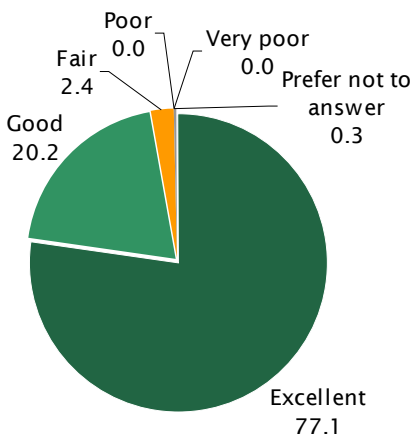
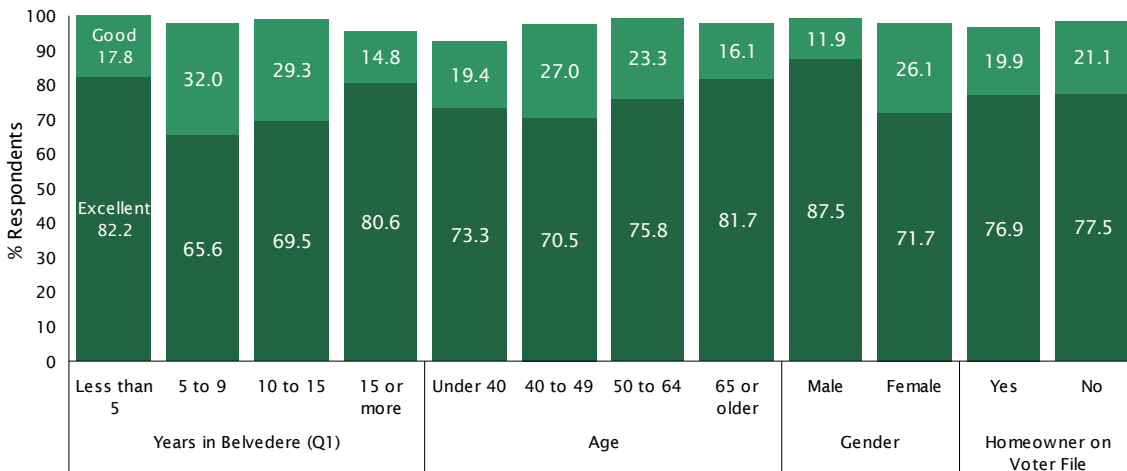


Figure 2 shows how ratings of the quality of life in the City of Belvedere varied by length of residence, age, gender, and home ownership. Although certain subgroups were somewhat more likely than their respective counterparts to rate the overall quality of life in the City as excellent (e.g., those who had lived in the City less than 5 years or at least 15 years, seniors, and males), the most striking pattern in the figure is that at least 9-in-10 respondents in *every* subgroup provided a rating of excellent or good when asked to rate the quality of life in Belvedere.

FIGURE 2 QUALITY OF LIFE BY YEARS IN BELVEDERE, AGE, GENDER & HOMEOWNER ON VOTER FILE

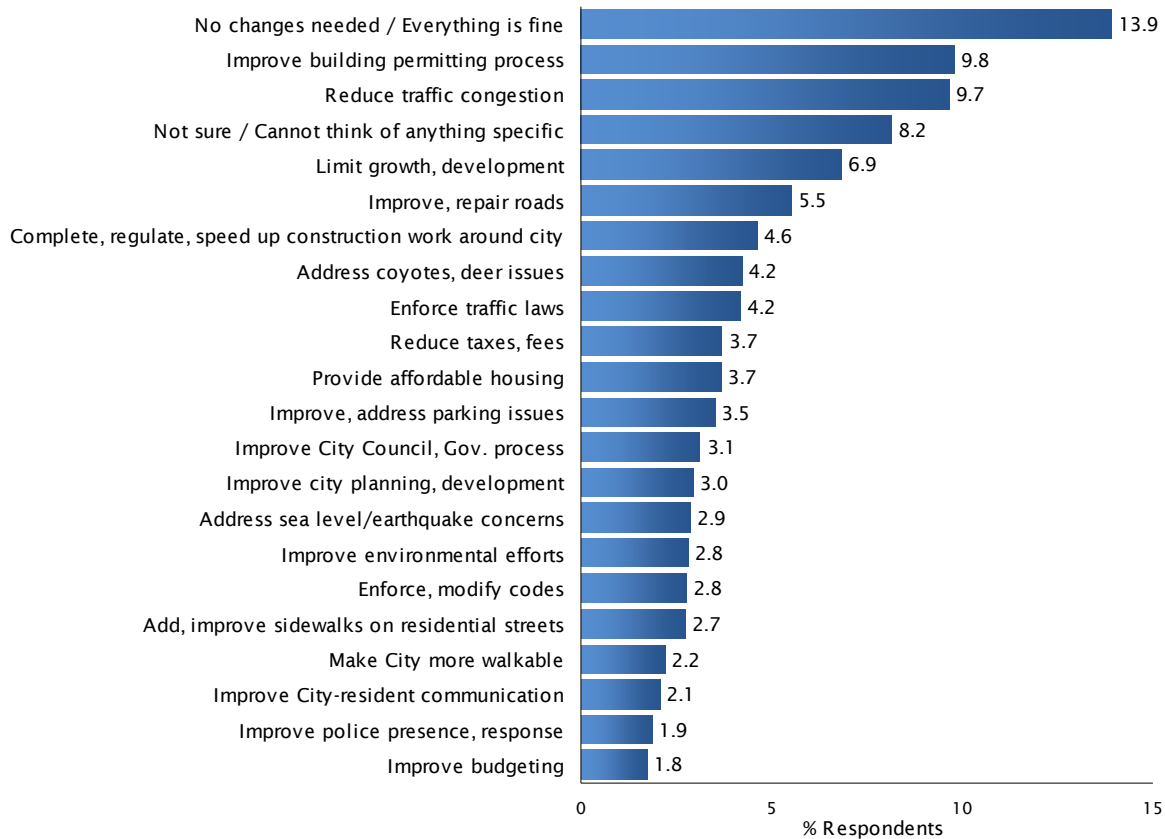


CHANGES TO IMPROVE BELVEDERE The next question in this series asked voters to indicate the one thing that city government could *change* to make Belvedere a better place to live, now and in the future. Question 3 was posed in an open-ended manner, allowing residents to mention any aspect or attribute that came to mind without being prompted by or restricted to a particular list of options. True North later reviewed the verbatim responses and grouped them into the categories shown in Figure 3.

The most common response to this question was that no changes are needed/everything is fine (14%), and an additional 8% indicated they could not think of a desired change. Among specific changes that were desired, improving the building permitting process (10%) was mentioned most often, followed by reducing traffic congestion (10%), limiting growth/development (7%), and improving/repairing roads (6%).

Question 3 *If the city government could change one thing to make Belvedere a better place to live now and in the future, what change would you like to see?*

FIGURE 3 CHANGES TO IMPROVE CITY



OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING The final question in this series asked respondents to indicate if, overall, they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of Belvedere is doing to provide city services. Because this question does not reference a specific program, facility, or service and requested that the respondent consider the City’s performance in general, the findings of this question may be regarded as an *overall performance rating* for the City.

As shown in Figure 4, more than eight-in-ten voters surveyed indicated that they were satisfied with the City of Belvedere’s efforts to provide municipal services, with 39% saying they were very satisfied and 46% somewhat satisfied. Approximately 12% reported that they were dissatisfied with the City’s overall performance, whereas 3% were unsure or unwilling to state their opinion. For the interested reader, Figure 5 displays how the percentage of respondents satisfied with the City’s overall performance varied by length of residence, age, gender, and home ownership status.

Question 4 *Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of Belvedere is doing to provide city services?*

FIGURE 4 OVERALL SATISFACTION

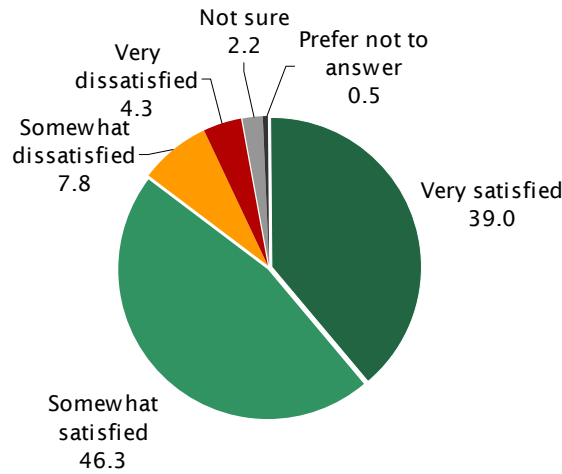
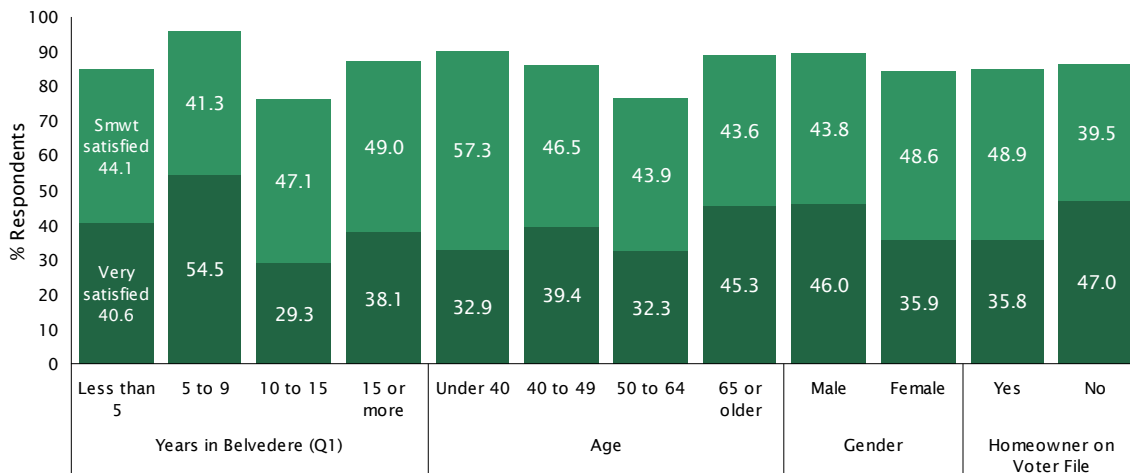


FIGURE 5 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY YEARS IN BELVEDERE, AGE, GENDER & HOMEOWNER ON VOTER FILE



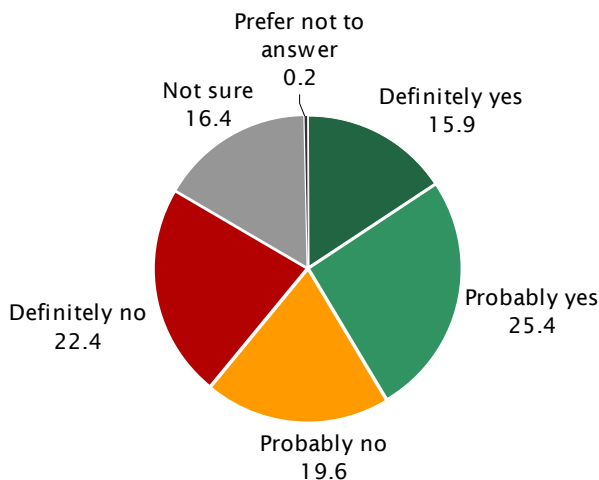
INITIAL BALLOT TEST

The primary research objective of this survey was to estimate voters' support for a measure that would levy \$980 annually per residential unit to provide funding exclusively for fire protection and fire prevention services, emergency medical and paramedic services, quick responses to 911 emergencies, and 24-hour ambulance services. To this end, Question 5 was designed to take an early assessment of voters' support for the proposed measure.

The motivation for placing Question 5 near the front of the survey is twofold. First, voter support for a measure can often depend on the amount of information they have about a measure. At this point in the survey, the respondent has not been provided information about the proposed measure beyond what is presented in the ballot language. This situation is analogous to a voter casting a ballot with limited knowledge about the measure, such as what might occur in the absence of an effective campaign. Question 5, also known as the Initial Ballot Test, is thus a good measure of voter support for the proposed measure *as it is today*, on the natural. Because the Initial Ballot Test provides a gauge of natural support for the measure, it also serves a second purpose in that it provides a useful baseline from which to judge the impact of various information items conveyed later in the survey on voter support for the measure.

Question 5 *Next year, voters in Belvedere may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure. To provide funding exclusively for fire protection and fire prevention services; emergency medical and paramedic services; quick responses to 911 emergencies; and 24-hour ambulance services; shall the City of Belvedere's fire protection measure levying \$980 annually per residential unit (with other rates as described in the voter pamphlet) be adopted, raising approximately one million dollars per year until ended by voters, with annual adjustments, independent oversight, and all money locally-controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 6 INITIAL BALLOT TEST



As shown in Figure 6, 41% of likely November 2024 voters surveyed indicated that they would definitely or probably support the proposed fire tax, whereas a similar percentage (42%) stated that they would oppose the measure and 17% were unsure or unwilling to share their vote choice. For special taxes in California, the level of support recorded at the Initial Ballot Test is approximately 25 percentage points below the two-thirds supermajority (66.7%) required for passage.

SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS For the interested reader, Table 1 shows how support for the measure at the Initial Ballot Test varied by key demographic traits. The blue column (Approximate % of Universe) indicates the percentage of the likely November 2022 electorate that each subgroup category comprises. When compared to their respective counterparts, support for the fire tax was notably higher among those who had lived in Belvedere at least 10 years, those generally satisfied with the City’s performance providing municipal services, those who rated the City’s fiscal management as excellent or good, Democrats, those from single Democrat households, seniors, and voters who are likely to participate in the March 2024 primary election. That said, it is also noteworthy that support for the proposed fire tax did not achieve the required two-thirds supermajority in any identified subgroup.

TABLE 1 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

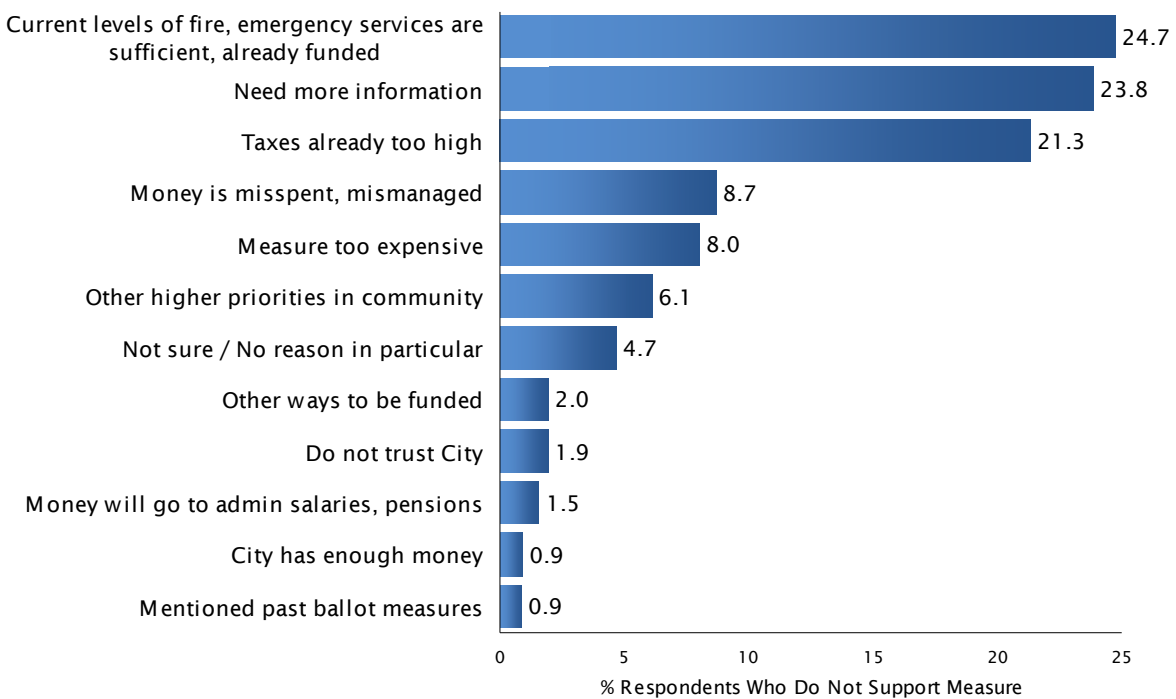
		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	% Not sure
Overall		100	41.3	16.4
Years in Belvedere (Q1)	Less than 5	21	35.5	25.1
	5 to 9	13	26.8	24.1
	10 to 15	19	46.0	11.3
	15 or more	47	44.8	13.0
Overall Satisfaction (Q4)	Satisfied	88	44.8	17.2
	Dis-satisfied	12	14.9	9.3
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	72	41.8	17.1
	No	28	40.2	14.6
Fiscal Management (Q14)	Excellent, good	60	54.5	13.7
	Fair	27	29.3	11.9
	Poor, very poor	12	3.9	16.8
Party	Democrat	48	50.9	12.2
	Republican	22	35.9	10.8
	Other / DTS	30	30.1	27.3
Registration Year	Since Nov '18	17	25.9	15.6
	Jun '06 to <Nov '18	21	42.2	14.0
	Before Jun '06	62	45.2	17.5
Age	Under 40	16	25.9	19.8
	40 to 49	15	40.8	21.1
	50 to 64	27	42.2	12.5
	65 or older	42	46.7	16.0
Household Party Type	Single dem	22	55.4	14.0
	Dual dem	16	48.6	14.0
	Single rep	8	49.3	6.1
	Dual rep	6	35.3	15.5
	Other / Mixed	49	32.4	20.0
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	86	42.2	17.5
	No	14	36.1	10.2
Likely Mar 2024 Voter	Yes	83	45.0	16.2
	No	17	23.1	17.6
Gender	Male	49	49.5	14.2
	Female	51	40.5	17.3
Hsld Needed EMS in Past 3 Years (Q15)	Yes	25	48.3	10.2
	No	75	40.8	16.7

REASONS FOR OPPOSING MEASURE Respondents who opposed the measure (or were unsure) at the Initial Ballot Test were subsequently asked if there was a particular reason for their position. Question 6 was asked in an open-ended manner, allowing respondents to mention any reason that came to mind without being prompted by, or restricted to, a particular list of options. True North later reviewed the verbatim responses and grouped them into the categories shown in Figure 7.

Among the specific reasons offered for not supporting the measure, the perception that current levels of fire and emergency services are sufficient/already funded (25%), a need for more information (24%), and a belief that taxes are already too high (21%) were the most common, followed by concerns that money has been/will be misspent (9%) and that the measure is too expensive (8%).

Question 6 *Is there a particular reason why you do not support or are unsure about the measure I just described?*

FIGURE 7 REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING MEASURE



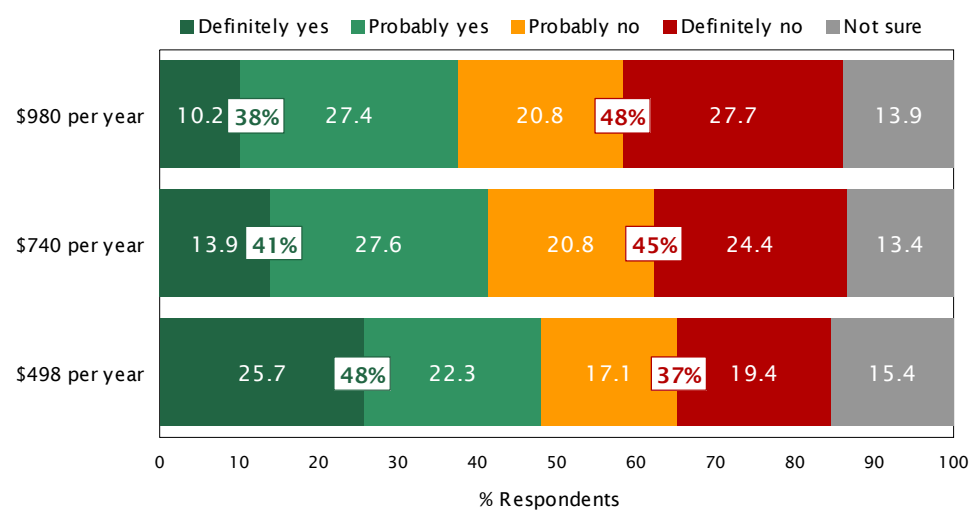
TAX THRESHOLD

Naturally, voter support for a revenue measure is often contingent on the cost of the measure. The higher the tax rate, all other things being equal, the less likely a voter is to support the measure. One of the goals of this study was thus to gauge the impact that changes in the tax rate can be expected to have on voter support for the proposed fire tax measure.

Question 7 was designed to do just that. Respondents were first instructed that the measure would raise money through annual property taxes paid by residential and commercial property owners, and that the amount to be charged was not yet finalized. They were then presented with the highest tax rate (\$980 per residential unit) and asked if they would support the proposed measure at that rate. If a respondent did not answer 'definitely yes', they were asked whether they would support the measure at the next lowest tax rate. The three tax rates tested and the percentage of respondents who indicated they would vote in favor of the measure at each rate are shown in Figure 8.

Question 7 *The measure I just described would raise money through annual property taxes paid by residential and commercial property owners. However, the amount to be charged has not been finalized yet. If you heard that your household would pay an additional _____ per year for your property, would you vote yes or no on the measure?*

FIGURE 8 TAX THRESHOLD



The most obvious pattern revealed in Figure 8 is that some voters are price sensitive when it comes to their support for the proposed fire tax measure, especially when their attention is *focused* on the tax rate as it is in Question 7. At the highest tax rate tested (\$980 per year), 38% of those surveyed indicated that they would vote in favor of the measure. Reducing the tax rate resulted in modest increases in support for the measure, with 48% of those surveyed indicating they would support the proposed measure at the lowest rate tested (\$498 per year).

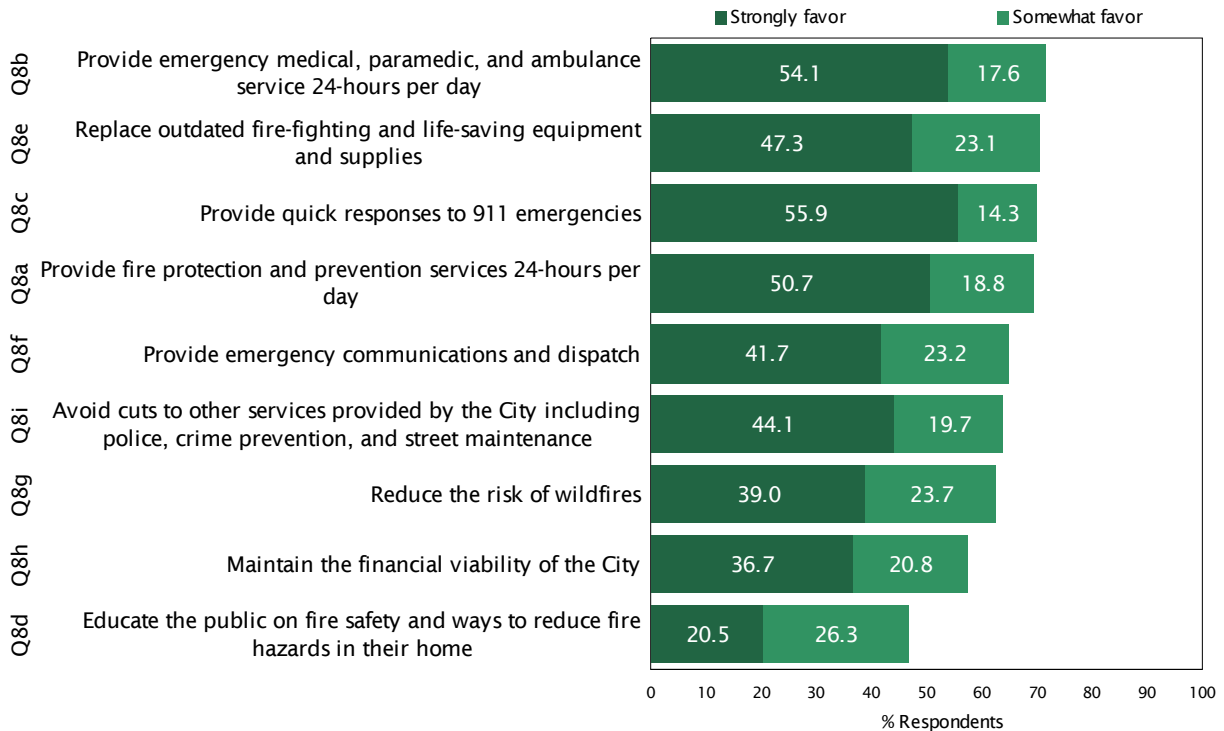
PROGRAMS & SERVICES

The ballot language presented in Question 5 indicated that the proposed measure would provide funding for fire protection and fire prevention services, emergency medical and paramedic services, quick responses to 911 emergencies, and 24-hour ambulance services. The purpose of Question 8 was to provide respondents with more details about the full range of services that would be funded by the proposed measure, as well as identify which of these services voters most favored funding with proceeds of the measure.

After reading each service, respondents were asked if they would favor or oppose spending some of the money on that particular item assuming that the measure passed. Descriptions of the services tested, as well as voters' responses, are shown in Figure 9 below.² The order in which the services were presented to respondents was randomized to avoid a systematic position bias.

Question 8 *The measure we've been discussing will provide funding for a variety of services in your community. If the measure passes, would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: -----, or do you not have an opinion?*

FIGURE 9 PROGRAMS & SERVICES



Most of the programs and services tested were popular with Belvedere voters. That said, the services that were favored by the *largest* percentage of respondents were providing emergency medical, paramedic, and ambulance services 24-hours per day (72% strongly or somewhat favor), replacing outdated fire-fighting and life-saving equipment and supplies (70%), providing quick

2. For the full text of the services tested, turn to Question 8 in *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 31.

responses to 911 emergencies (70%), and providing fire protection and prevention services 24-hours per day (70%).

SERVICE RATINGS BY INITIAL SUPPORT Table 2 presents the top five services (showing the percentage of respondents who *strongly* favor each) by position at the Initial Ballot Test. Not surprisingly, individuals who initially opposed the measure were generally less likely to favor spending money on a given service when compared with supporters. Nevertheless, initial supporters, opponents, and the undecided did agree on four of the top five priorities for funding.

TABLE 2 TOP PROGRAMS & SERVICES BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Item	Project / Services Summary	% Favor
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 108)	Q8c	Provide quick responses to 911 emergencies	92
	Q8b	Provide emergency medical, paramedic, and ambulance service 24-hours per day	83
	Q8a	Provide fire protection and prevention services 24-hours per day	78
	Q8e	Replace outdated fire-fighting and life-saving equipment and supplies	74
	Q8i	Avoid cuts to other services provided by the City including police, crime prevention, and street maintenance	71
Probably or Definitely No (n = 110)	Q8b	Provide emergency medical, paramedic, and ambulance service 24-hours per day	25
	Q8a	Provide fire protection and prevention services 24-hours per day	22
	Q8e	Replace outdated fire-fighting and life-saving equipment and supplies	21
	Q8c	Provide quick responses to 911 emergencies	19
	Q8i	Avoid cuts to other services provided by the City including police, crime prevention, and street maintenance	17
Not Sure (n = 43)	Q8c	Provide quick responses to 911 emergencies	61
	Q8b	Provide emergency medical, paramedic, and ambulance service 24-hours per day	56
	Q8a	Provide fire protection and prevention services 24-hours per day	54
	Q8f	Provide emergency communications and dispatch	48
	Q8e	Replace outdated fire-fighting and life-saving equipment and supplies	47

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

If the City chooses to place a measure on an upcoming ballot, voters will be exposed to various arguments about the measure in the ensuing months. Proponents of the measure will present arguments to try to persuade voters to support a measure, just as opponents may present arguments to achieve the opposite goal. For this study to be a reliable gauge of voter support for the proposed fire tax measure, it is important that the survey simulate the type of discussion and debate that will occur prior to the vote taking place and identify how this information ultimately shapes voters' opinions about the measure.

The objective of Question 9 was thus to present respondents with arguments in favor of the proposed measure and identify whether they felt the arguments were convincing reasons to support it. Arguments in opposition to the measure were also presented and are discussed later in this report (see *Negative Arguments* on page 21). Within each series, specific arguments were administered in random order to avoid a systematic position bias.

Question 9 *Supporters of the measure say: ----- Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to SUPPORT the measure?*

FIGURE 10 POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

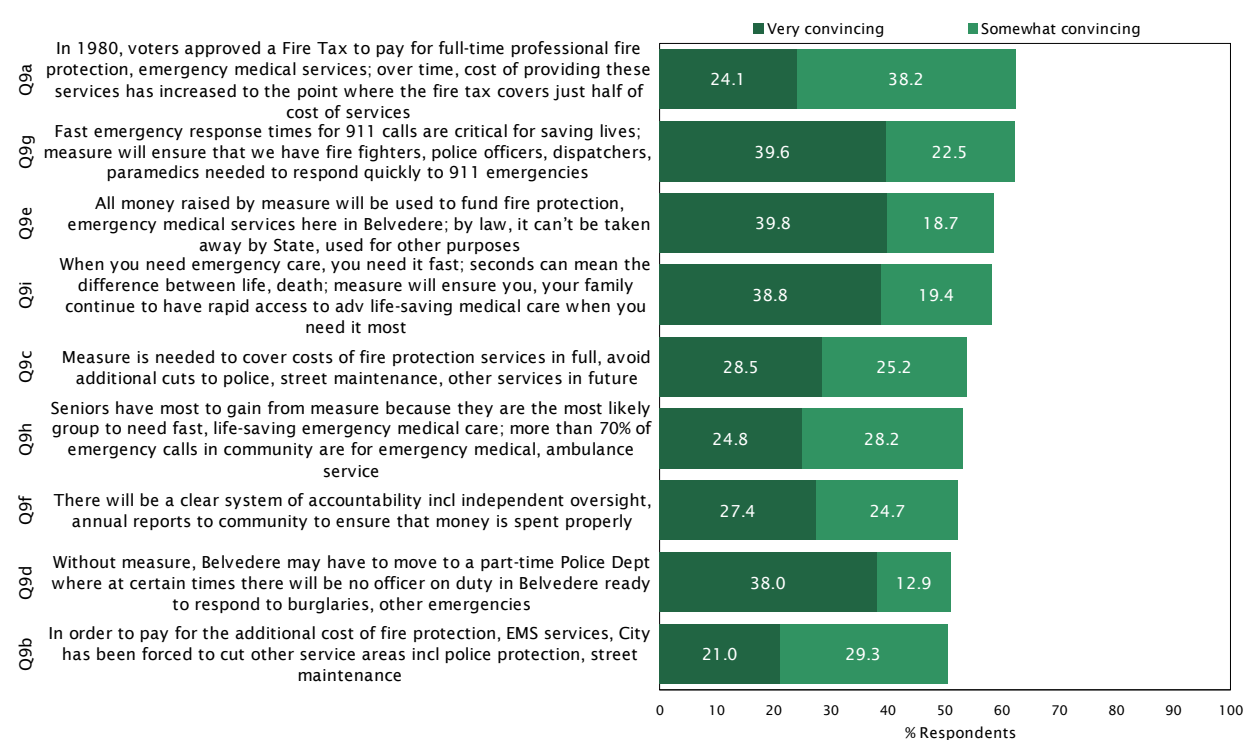


Figure 10 presents the truncated positive arguments tested, as well as voters' reactions to the arguments. The arguments are ranked from most convincing to least convincing based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that the argument was either a 'very convincing' or 'somewhat convincing' reason to support the fire tax measure. Using this methodology, the most compelling positive arguments were: *In 1980, voters approved a Fire Tax to pay for full-time professional fire protection and emergency medical services. Over time, the cost of provid-*

ing these services has increased to the point where the fire tax covers just half of the cost of the services (62% very or somewhat convincing), Fast emergency response times for 9-1-1 calls are critical for saving lives. This measure will ensure that we have the fire fighters, police officers, dispatchers, and paramedics needed to respond quickly to 9-1-1 emergencies (62%), All money raised by the measure will be used to fund fire protection and emergency medical services here in Belvedere. By law, it can't be taken away by the State or used for other purposes (59%), and When you need emergency care, you need it fast. Seconds can mean the difference between life and death. This measure will ensure you and your family continue to have rapid access to advanced life-saving medical care when you need it most (58%).

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS BY INITIAL SUPPORT Table 3 on the next page lists the top five most convincing positive arguments (showing the percentage of respondents who cited it as very convincing) according to respondents' vote choice at the Initial Ballot Test. The positive arguments resonated with a much higher percentage of voters initially inclined to support the measure compared with those who initially opposed the measure or were unsure. Nevertheless, four arguments were ranked among the top five most compelling by all three groups.

FIGURE 11 TOP POSITIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

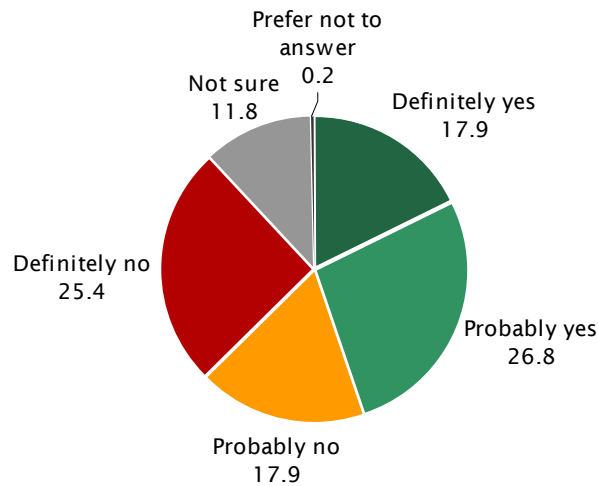
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Item	Positive Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 108)	Q9i	When you need emergency care, you need it fast; seconds can mean the difference between life, death; measure will ensure you, your family continue to have rapid access to adv life-saving medical care when you need it most	64
	Q9d	Without measure, Belvedere may have to move to a part-time Police Dept where at certain times there will be no officer on duty in Belvedere ready to respond to burglaries, other emergencies	63
	Q9g	Fast emergency response times for 911 calls are critical for saving lives; measure will ensure that we have fire fighters, police officers, dispatchers, paramedics needed to respond quickly to 911 emergencies	62
	Q9e	All money raised by measure will be used to fund fire protection, emergency medical services here in Belvedere; by law, it can't be taken away by State, used for other purposes	61
	Q9c	Measure is needed to cover costs of fire protection services in full, avoid additional cuts to police, street maintenance, other services in future	50
Probably or Definitely No (n = 110)	Q9e	All money raised by measure will be used to fund fire protection, emergency medical services here in Belvedere; by law, it can't be taken away by State, used for other purposes	20
	Q9g	Fast emergency response times for 911 calls are critical for saving lives; measure will ensure that we have fire fighters, police officers, dispatchers, paramedics needed to respond quickly to 911 emergencies	17
	Q9d	Without measure, Belvedere may have to move to a part-time Police Dept where at certain times there will be no officer on duty in Belvedere ready to respond to burglaries, other emergencies	15
	Q9i	When you need emergency care, you need it fast; seconds can mean the difference between life, death; measure will ensure you, your family continue to have rapid access to adv life-saving medical care when you need it most	14
	Q9h	Seniors have most to gain from measure because they are the most likely group to need fast, life-saving emergency medical care; more than 70% of emergency calls in community are for emergency medical, ambulance service	13
Not Sure (n = 43)	Q9g	Fast emergency response times for 911 calls are critical for saving lives; measure will ensure that we have fire fighters, police officers, dispatchers, paramedics needed to respond quickly to 911 emergencies	41
	Q9e	All money raised by measure will be used to fund fire protection, emergency medical services here in Belvedere; by law, it can't be taken away by State, used for other purposes	39
	Q9i	When you need emergency care, you need it fast; seconds can mean the difference between life, death; measure will ensure you, your family continue to have rapid access to adv life-saving medical care when you need it most	39
	Q9f	There will be a clear system of accountability incl independent oversight, annual reports to community to ensure that money is spent properly	34
	Q9d	Without measure, Belvedere may have to move to a part-time Police Dept where at certain times there will be no officer on duty in Belvedere ready to respond to burglaries, other emergencies	34

INTERIM BALLOT TEST

After exposing respondents to services that could be funded by the measure as well as the types of positive arguments voters may encounter during an election cycle, the survey again presented respondents with the ballot language used previously to gauge how support for the proposed fire tax measure may have changed. As shown in Figure 12, overall support among likely November 2024 voters ticked up slightly (3%) to 45%, with 18% of voters indicating that they would *definitely* vote yes on the measure. Approximately 43% of respondents opposed the measure at this point in the survey, and an additional 12% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

Question 10 *Sometimes people change their mind about a measure once they have more information about it. Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it again. To provide funding exclusively for fire protection and fire prevention services; emergency medical and paramedic services; quick responses to 911 emergencies; and 24-hour ambulance services; shall the City of Belvedere's fire protection measure levying \$980 annually per residential unit (with other rates as described in the voter pamphlet) be adopted, raising approximately one million dollars per year until ended by voters, with annual adjustments, independent oversight, and all money locally-controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 12 INTERIM BALLOT TEST



SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS Table 3 on the next page shows how support for the measure at this point in the survey varied by key voter subgroups, as well as the change in subgroup support when compared with the Initial Ballot Test. Positive differences appear in green, whereas negative differences appear in red. As shown in the table, support for the fire tax measure increased by modest amounts (less than 5 percentage points) between the Initial and Interim Ballot Test for nearly all voter subgroups. Notable exceptions include voters who have lived in Belvedere between 5 and 9 years (+16%), those who registered to vote in the City since November 2018 (+8%), and dual Republican households (-7%).

TABLE 3 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INTERIM BALLOT TEST

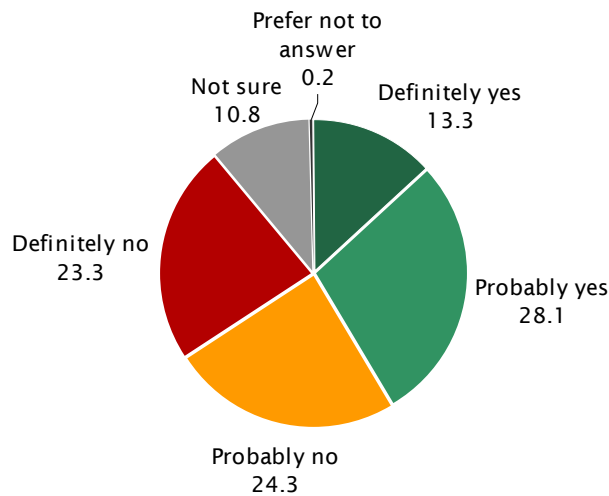
		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q5)
Overall		100	44.7	+3.4
Years in Belvedere (Q1)	Less than 5	21	37.1	+1.6
	5 to 9	13	42.5	+15.8
	10 to 15	19	51.4	+5.3
	15 or more	47	45.0	+0.2
Overall Satisfaction (Q4)	Satisfied	88	47.8	+3.0
	Dis-satisfied	12	22.1	+7.2
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	72	43.7	+2.0
	No	28	47.3	+7.1
Fiscal Management (Q14)	Excellent, good	60	61.7	+7.2
	Fair	27	30.2	+0.9
	Poor, very poor	12	2.8	-1.1
Party	Democrat	48	53.5	+2.5
	Republican	22	35.7	-0.2
	Other / DTS	30	37.5	+7.4
Registration Year	Since Nov '18	17	34.1	+8.2
	Jun '06 to <Nov '18	21	43.6	+1.4
	Before Jun '06	62	48.0	+2.8
Age	Under 40	16	33.2	+7.3
	40 to 49	15	40.8	+0.0
	50 to 64	27	45.5	+3.3
	65 or older	42	49.9	+3.2
Household Party Type	Single dem	22	57.1	+1.7
	Dual dem	16	54.1	+5.5
	Single rep	8	49.3	+0.0
	Dual rep	6	28.3	-7.0
	Other / Mixed	49	37.6	+5.2
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	86	45.9	+3.7
	No	14	37.3	+1.2
Likely Mar 2024 Voter	Yes	83	47.7	+2.7
	No	17	29.9	+6.8
Gender	Male	49	54.3	+4.8
	Female	51	43.2	+2.7
Hsld Needed EMS in Past 3 Years (Q15)	Yes	25	48.1	-0.2
	No	75	45.5	+4.7

CLARIFICATION OF ESCALATOR Local funding for fire and emergency medical services in Belvedere has not kept pace with the cost of providing the services, which is why the City has had to cut other services and is facing additional cuts in the future. To solve this problem, the cost of the proposed measure would adjust annually by up to 6% to ensure that fire and emergency medical services are fully funded now and protected from cuts in the future. After clarifying the magnitude of the escalator and why it is needed, the survey revisited the question of whether respondents would vote yes or no on the fire tax measure.

As shown in Figure 13 on the next page, clarifying the 6% annual escalator had a cooling effect on support for the fire tax measure, with 41% indicating they would support the measure at this point in the survey, 48% opposed, and 11% unsure or unwilling to share their opinion.

Question 11 *Local funding for fire and emergency medical services in Belvedere has not kept pace with the cost of providing the services, which is why the City has had to cut other services and is facing additional cuts in the future. To solve this problem, the cost of the proposed measure would adjust annually by up to 6% to ensure that fire and emergency medical services are fully funded now and protected from cuts in the future. Knowing this, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 13 INTERIM BALLOT TEST WITH 6% ESCALATOR CLARIFICATION

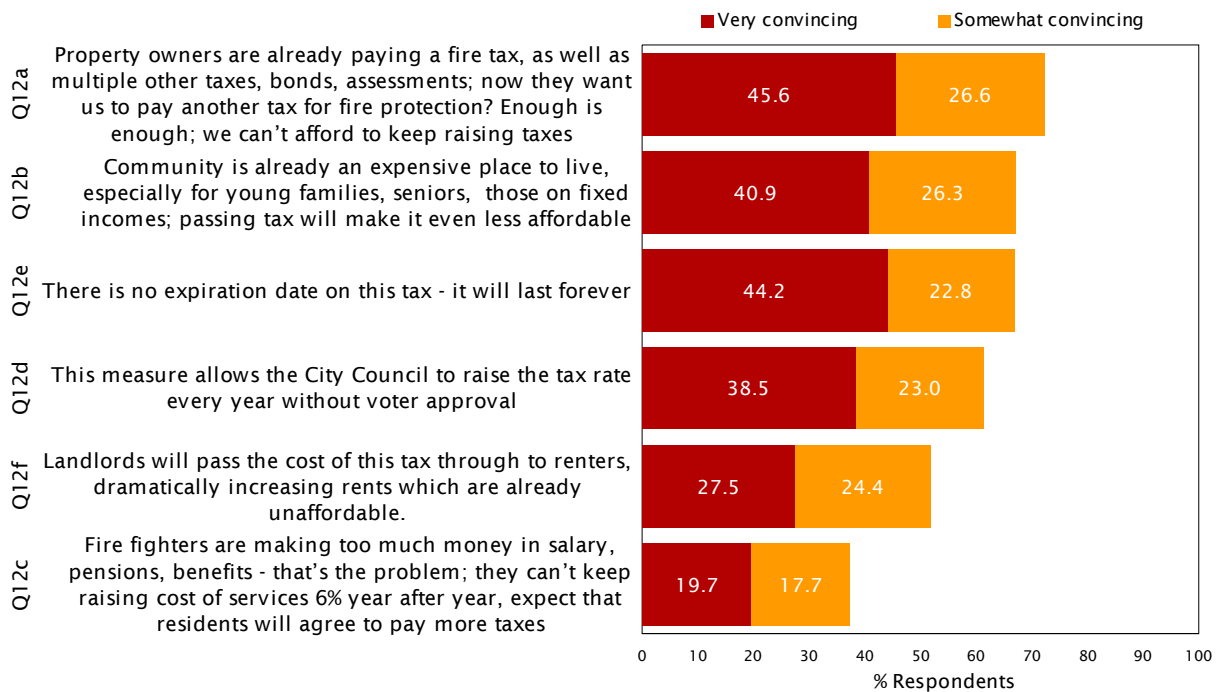


NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

Whereas Question 10 of the survey presented respondents with arguments in favor of the fire tax measure, Question 12 presented respondents with arguments designed to elicit opposition to the measure. In the case of Question 12, however, respondents were asked whether they felt that the argument was a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to *oppose* the measure. The arguments tested, as well as voters’ opinions about the arguments, are presented below in Figure 14.

Question 12 *Next, let me tell you what opponents of the measure are saying. Opponents of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE the measure?*

FIGURE 14 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS



The most compelling negative arguments were: *Property owners are already paying a fire tax, as well as multiple other taxes, bonds, and assessments. Now they want us to pay another tax for fire protection? Enough is enough. We can't afford to keep raising our taxes* (72% very or somewhat convincing), *Our community is already an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, and those on fixed incomes. Passing this tax will make it even less affordable* (67%), and *There is no expiration date on this tax - it will last forever* (67%).

NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS BY INITIAL SUPPORT Table 4 on the next page ranks the negative arguments (showing the percentage of respondents who cited each as very convincing) according to respondents’ vote choice at the Initial Ballot Test.

TABLE 4 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

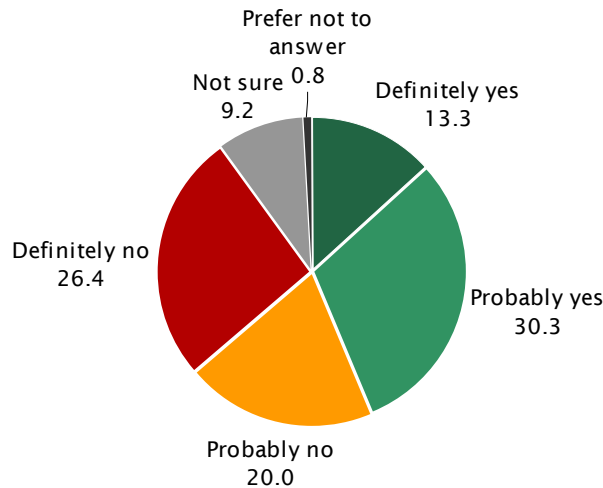
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Item	Negative Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 108)	Q12e	There is no expiration date on this tax - it will last forever	28
	Q12d	This measure allows the City Council to raise the tax rate every year without voter approval	27
	Q12a	Property owners are already paying a fire tax, as well as multiple other taxes, bonds, assessments; now they want us to pay another tax for fire protection? Enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	15
	Q12f	Landlords will pass the cost of this tax through to renters, dramatically increasing rents which are already unaffordable.	13
	Q12c	Fire fighters are making too much money in salary, pensions, benefits - that's the problem; they can't keep raising cost of services 6% year after year, expect that residents will agree to pay more taxes	13
Probably or Definitely No (n = 110)	Q12a	Property owners are already paying a fire tax, as well as multiple other taxes, bonds, assessments; now they want us to pay another tax for fire protection? Enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	76
	Q12b	Community is already an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed incomes; passing tax will make it even less affordable	68
	Q12e	There is no expiration date on this tax - it will last forever	60
	Q12d	This measure allows the City Council to raise the tax rate every year without voter approval	52
	Q12f	Landlords will pass the cost of this tax through to renters, dramatically increasing rents which are already unaffordable.	41
Not Sure (n = 43)	Q12a	Property owners are already paying a fire tax, as well as multiple other taxes, bonds, assessments; now they want us to pay another tax for fire protection? Enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	47
	Q12e	There is no expiration date on this tax - it will last forever	45
	Q12b	Community is already an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed incomes; passing tax will make it even less affordable	43
	Q12d	This measure allows the City Council to raise the tax rate every year without voter approval	36
	Q12f	Landlords will pass the cost of this tax through to renters, dramatically increasing rents which are already unaffordable.	29

FINAL BALLOT TEST

Voters' opinions about ballot measures are often not rigid, especially when the amount of information presented to the public on a measure has been limited. A goal of the survey was thus to gauge how voters' opinions about the proposed measure may be affected by the information they could encounter during the course of an election cycle. After providing respondents with the wording of the proposed measure, services that could be funded, and arguments in favor of and against the proposal, the survey again asked voters whether they would vote 'yes' or 'no' on the proposed fire tax measure.

Question 13 *Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it one more time. To provide funding exclusively for fire protection and fire prevention services; emergency medical and paramedic services; quick responses to 911 emergencies; and 24-hour ambulance services; shall the City of Belvedere's fire protection measure levying \$980 annually per residential unit (with other rates as described in the voter pamphlet) be adopted, raising approximately one million dollars per year until ended by voters, with annual adjustments, independent oversight, and all money locally-controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 15 FINAL BALLOT TEST



At this point in the survey, support for the proposed fire tax measure was found among 44% of likely November 2024 voters, with 13% indicating that they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 46% of respondents were opposed to the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 10% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.



CHANGE IN SUPPORT

Table 5 provides a closer look at how support for the proposed measure changed over the course of the interview by calculating the difference in support between the Initial, Interim, and Final Ballot tests within various subgroups of voters. The percentage of support for the measure at the Final Ballot Test is shown in the column with the heading *% Probably or Definitely Yes*. The columns to the right show the difference between the Final and the Initial, and the Final and Interim Ballot Tests. Positive differences appear in green, while negative differences appear in red.

TABLE 5 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT FINAL BALLOT TEST

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Change From Interim Ballot Test (Q10)
Overall		100	43.6	+2.3	-1.1
Years in Belvedere (Q1)	Less than 5	21	37.1	+1.6	No change
	5 to 9	13	39.9	+13.2	-2.6
	10 to 15	19	49.9	+3.8	-1.5
	15 or more	47	43.9	-0.9	-1.1
Overall Satisfaction (Q4)	Satisfied	88	46.9	+2.0	-1.0
	Dis-satisfied	12	19.7	+4.8	-2.4
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	72	43.3	+1.5	-0.4
	No	28	44.5	+4.3	-2.8
Fiscal Management (Q14)	Excellent, good	60	60.7	+6.2	-1.0
	Fair	27	28.8	-0.5	-1.4
	Poor, very poor	12	0.0	-3.9	-2.8
Party	Democrat	48	52.8	+1.9	-0.7
	Republican	22	32.2	-3.7	-3.5
	Other / DTS	30	37.5	+7.4	+0.0
Registration Year	Since Nov '18	17	34.1	+8.2	No change
	Jun '06 to <Nov '18	21	42.1	-0.1	-1.6
	Before Jun '06	62	46.7	+1.5	-1.3
Age	Under 40	16	33.2	+7.3	No change
	40 to 49	15	40.8	+0.0	No change
	50 to 64	27	42.5	+0.3	-3.0
	65 or older	42	49.3	+2.6	-0.7
Household Party Type	Single dem	22	57.1	+1.7	No change
	Dual dem	16	54.1	+5.5	No change
	Single rep	8	39.0	-10.3	-10.3
	Dual rep	6	28.3	-7.0	+0.0
	Other / Mixed	49	36.9	+4.5	-0.7
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	86	45.0	+2.8	-1.0
	No	14	35.2	-0.9	-2.1
Likely Mar 2024 Voter	Yes	83	46.4	+1.4	-1.3
	No	17	29.9	+6.8	No change
Gender	Male	49	53.2	+3.7	-1.1
	Female	51	41.9	+1.4	-1.3
Hsld Needed EMS in Past 3 Years (Q15)	Yes	25	46.9	-1.4	-1.2
	No	75	44.4	+3.6	-1.1

As expected, voters generally responded to the negative arguments with a reduction in their support for the fire tax measure when compared with the levels recorded at the Interim Ballot Test. The general trend over the course of the entire survey (Initial to Final Ballot Test), however, was one of increasing support, averaging +2% overall. Nevertheless, even with the increase in support for the proposed measure over the course of the interview, support remained 23% *below* the supermajority required for passage of a special tax at the conclusion of the interview.

Whereas Table 5 displays change in support for the measure over the course of the interview at the subgroup level, Table 6 displays the individual-level changes that occurred between the Initial and Final Ballot tests for the measure. On the left side of the table is shown each of the response options to the Initial Ballot Test and the percentage of respondents in each group. The cells in the body of the table depict movement within each response group (row) based on the information provided throughout the course of the survey as recorded by the Final Ballot Test. For example, in the first row we see that of the 15.9% of respondents who indicated that they would definitely support the measure at the Initial Ballot Test, 9.6% also indicated they would definitely support the measure at the Final Ballot Test. Approximately 5.1% moved to the probably support group, 1.2% moved to the probably oppose group, 0.0% moved to the definitely oppose group, and 0.0% stated they were now unsure of their vote choice.

To ease interpretation of the table, the cells are color coded. Red shaded cells indicate declining support, green shaded cells indicate increasing support, whereas white cells indicate no movement. Moreover, within the cells, a white font indicates a fundamental change in the vote: from yes to no, no to yes, or not sure to either yes or no.

TABLE 6 MOVEMENT BETWEEN INITIAL & FINAL BALLOT TEST

Initial Ballot Test (Q5)		Final Ballot Test (Q13)				
		Definitely support	Probably support	Probably oppose	Definitely oppose	Not sure
Definitely support	15.9% →	9.6%	5.1%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Probably support	25.4% →	3.6%	20.0%	1.1%	0.3%	0.4%
Probably oppose	19.6% →	0.0%	1.0%	11.7%	6.3%	0.7%
Definitely oppose	22.4% →	0.0%	0.5%	3.0%	18.4%	0.5%
Not sure	16.7% →	0.0%	3.8%	3.1%	1.3%	8.5%

As one might expect, the information conveyed in the survey had the greatest impact on individuals who either weren't sure about how they would vote at the Initial Ballot Test or were tentative in their vote choice (probably yes or probably no). Moreover, Table 6 makes clear that although the information did impact some voters, it did not do so in a consistent way for all respondents. Some respondents found the information conveyed during the course of the interview to be a reason to become more supportive of the measure, whereas a smaller percentage found the same information to be a reason to be less supportive. Despite 14% of respondents making a *fundamental*³ shift in their opinion about the measure over the course of the interview, the net impact is that support for the measure at the Final Ballot Test (44%) was just a few percentage points different than support at the Initial Ballot Test (41%).

3. This is, they changed from a position of support, opposition or undecided at the Initial Ballot Test to a different position at the Final Ballot Test.

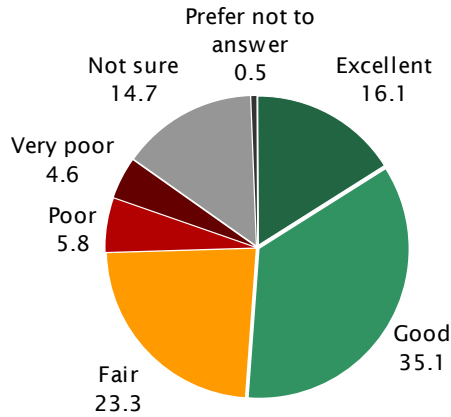
FISCAL MANAGEMENT

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked a general question about their opinion of the City’s fiscal management, as well as some basic demographic information about themselves and their households.

Question 14 asked respondents to rate the job the City of Belvedere has done in managing its financial resources. Nearly three-quarters of voters gave the City a positive or neutral mark, with 16% rating the City’s performance as excellent, 35% good, and 23% fair. Approximately 10% rated the job the City has done in managing its finances as poor or very poor, while 15% confided they were not sure or preferred to not answer the question (Figure 16).

Question 14 *In your opinion, has the City of Belvedere done an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job of managing its financial resources?*

FIGURE 16 FISCAL MANAGEMENT





BACKGROUND & DEMOGRAPHICS

TABLE 7 DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE

<i>Total Respondents</i>	261
Years in Belvedere (Q1)	
Less than 5	20.6
5 to 9	12.4
10 to 15	19.2
15 or more	47.1
Prefer not to answer	0.8
Hsld Needed EMS in Past 3 Years (Q15)	
Yes	23.9
No	73.1
Prefer not to answer	3.1
Gender	
Male	44.7
Female	46.7
Non-binary	0.0
Prefer not to answer	8.6
Party	
Democrat	47.7
Republican	22.2
Other / DTS	30.1
Age	
Under 40	15.5
40 to 49	15.3
50 to 64	27.2
65 or older	42.0
Registration Year	
Since Nov '18	16.8
Jun '06 to <Nov '18	20.7
Before Jun '06	62.5
Household Party Type	
Single dem	21.6
Dual dem	15.7
Single rep	7.6
Dual rep	5.8
Other / Mixed	49.4
Homeowner on Voter File	
Yes	72.2
No	27.8
Likely to Vote by Mail	
Yes	86.0
No	14.0
Likely Mar 2024 Voter	
Yes	83.3
No	16.7

In addition to questions directly related to the proposed measure, the study collected basic demographic information about respondents and their households. Some of this information was gathered during the interview, although much of it was collected from the voter file. The profile of the likely November 2024 voter sample used for this study is shown in Table 7.



M E T H O D O L O G Y

The following sections outline the methodology used in the study, as well as the motivation for using certain techniques.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT Dr. McLarney of True North Research worked closely with the City of Belvedere to develop a questionnaire that covered the topics of interest and avoided possible sources of systematic measurement error, including position-order effects, wording effects, response-category effects, scaling effects, and priming. Several questions included multiple individual items. Because asking items in a set order can lead to a systematic position bias in responses, items were asked in random order for each respondent.

Some of the questions asked in this study were presented only to a subset of respondents. For example, only individuals who did not support the measure or were unsure at the Initial Ballot Test (Question 5) were asked if there was a particular reason they did not support or were unsure about the measure (Question 6). The questionnaire included with this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 31) identifies the skip patterns that were used during the interview to ensure that each respondent received the appropriate questions.

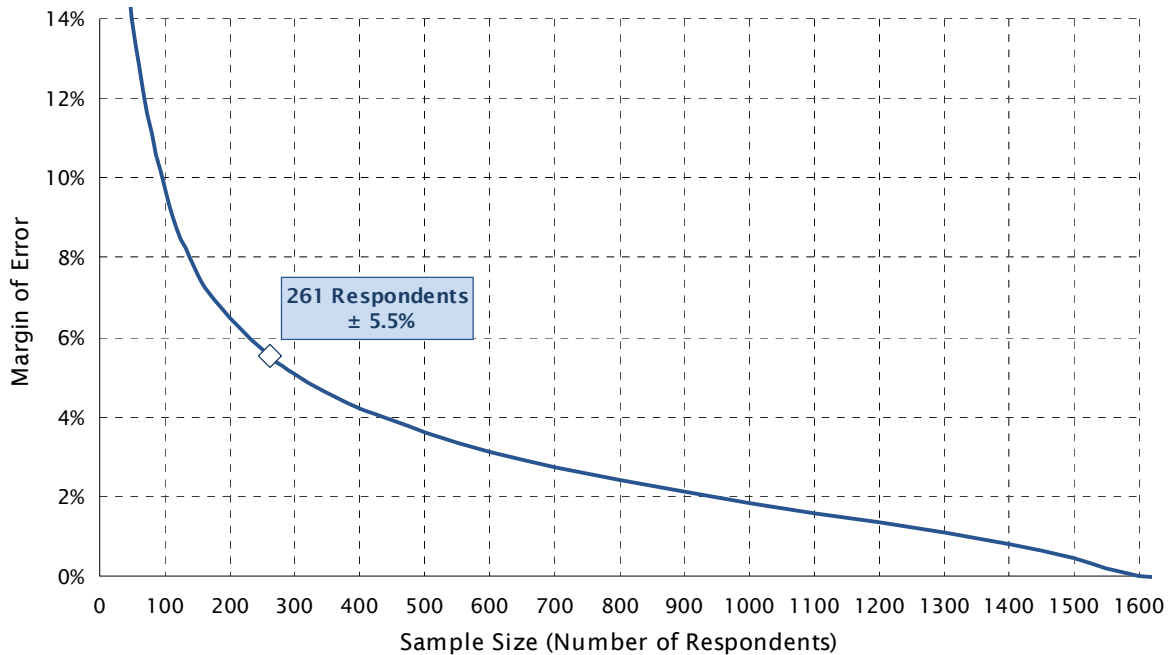
PROGRAMMING & PRE-TEST Prior to fielding the survey, the questionnaire was CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) programmed to assist interviewers when conducting telephone interviews. The CATI program automatically navigates skip patterns, randomizes the appropriate question items, and alerts the interviewer to certain types of keypunching mistakes should they occur. The survey was also programmed into a passcode-protected online survey application to allow online participation for sampled voters. The integrity of the questionnaire was pre-tested internally by True North and by dialing into voter households in the City prior to formally beginning the survey.

SAMPLE The survey was administered to a stratified and clustered random sample of registered voters in the City of Belvedere who are likely to participate in the November 2024 election, with a subset who are also likely to participate in the lower turnout March 2024 primary election. Consistent with the profile of this universe, the sample was stratified into clusters, each representing a combination of age, gender, and household party type. Individuals were then randomly selected based on their profile into an appropriate cluster. This method ensures that if a person of a particular profile refuses to participate in the study, they are replaced by an individual who shares their same profile.

STATISTICAL MARGIN OF ERROR By using the probability-based sampling design noted above, True North ensured that the final sample was representative of voters in the City who are likely to participate in the November 2024 election. The results of the sample can thus be used to estimate the opinions of *all* voters likely to participate in the November 2024 election. Because not all voters participated in the survey, however, the results have what is known as a statistical margin of error due to sampling. The margin of error refers to the difference between what was found in the survey of 261 voters for a particular question and what would have been found if all estimated 1,546 likely November 2024 voters in the City had been surveyed.

Figure 17 provides a graphic plot of the *maximum* margin of error in this study. The maximum margin of error for a dichotomous percentage result occurs when the answers are evenly split such that 50% provide one response and 50% provide the alternative response. For this survey, the maximum margin of error is $\pm 5.5\%$ at the 95% confidence level.

FIGURE 17 MAXIMUM MARGIN OF ERROR DUE TO SAMPLING



Within this report, figures and tables show how responses to certain questions varied by subgroups such as age, gender, and partisan affiliation. Figure 17 is thus useful for understanding how the maximum margin of error for a percentage estimate will grow as the number of individuals asked a question (or in a particular subgroup) shrinks. Because the margin of error grows exponentially as the sample size decreases, the reader should use caution when generalizing and interpreting the results for small subgroups.

RECRUITING & DATA COLLECTION The survey followed a mixed-method design that employed multiple recruiting methods (mail, email, text, and telephone) and multiple data collection methods (telephone and online). Telephone interviews averaged 16 minutes in length and were conducted during weekday evenings (5:30PM to 9PM) and on weekends (10AM to 5PM). It is standard practice not to call during the day on weekdays because most working adults are unavailable and thus calling during those hours would likely bias the sample.

Voters recruited via mail, email, and text were assigned a unique passcode to ensure that only voters who received an invitation could access the online survey site, and that each voter could complete the survey only one time. A total of 261 surveys were completed between July 5 and July 19, 2023.

DATA PROCESSING Data processing consisted of checking the data for errors or inconsistencies, coding and recoding responses, weighting, and preparing frequency analyses and cross-tabulations.

ROUNDING Numbers that end in 0.5 or higher are rounded up to the nearest whole number, whereas numbers that end in 0.4 or lower are rounded down to the nearest whole number. These same rounding rules are also applied, when needed, to arrive at numbers that include a decimal place in constructing figures and tables. Occasionally, these rounding rules lead to small discrepancies in the first decimal place when comparing tables and charts for a given question.

QUESTIONNAIRE & TOPLINES



*City of Belvedere
Fire Tax Feasibility Survey
Final Toplines (n=261)
July 2023*

Section 1: Introduction to Study

Hi, may I please speak to _____. My name is _____, and I'm calling from TNR on behalf of the City of Belvedere (BELL-vuh-deer). The City is conducting a survey of voters about important issues and would like to get your opinions.

If needed: This is a survey about important issues in your community. I'm NOT trying to sell anything and I won't ask for a donation.

If needed: Your answers will be confidential - the City won't see individual responses, just aggregate results.

If needed: The survey should take about 12 minutes to complete.

If needed: If now is not a convenient time, can you let me know a better time so I can call back?

If the person asks why you need to speak to the listed person or if they ask to participate instead, explain: For statistical purposes, at this time the survey must only be completed by this particular individual.

Section 2: Quality of Life & City Services

I'd like to begin by asking you a few questions about what it is like to live in Belvedere.

Q1	How long have you lived in Belvedere?		
	1	Less than 1 year	2%
	2	1 to 4 years	18%
	3	5 to 9 years	12%
	4	10 to 14 years	19%
	5	15 years or longer	47%
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%
Q2	How would you rate the overall quality of life in Belvedere? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?		
	1	Excellent	77%
	2	Good	20%
	3	Fair	2%
	4	Poor	0%
	5	Very poor	0%
	98	Not sure	0%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%

Q3	If the city government could change one thing to make Belvedere a better place to live now and in the future, what change would you like to see? Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below.	
	No changes needed / Everything is fine	14%
	Reduce traffic congestion	10%
	Improve building permitting process	10%
	Not sure / Cannot think of anything specific	8%
	Limit growth, development	7%
	Improve, repair roads	6%
	Complete, regulate, speed up construction work around city	5%
	Reduce taxes, fees	4%
	Provide affordable housing	4%
	Improve, address parking issues	4%
	Enforce traffic laws	4%
	Address coyote, deer issues	4%
	Add, improve sidewalks on residential streets	3%
	Address sea level/earthquake concerns	3%
	Improve City Council, Gov. process	3%
	Enforce, modify codes	3%
	Improve environmental efforts	3%
	Improve city planning, development	3%
	Make City more walkable	2%
	Improve budgeting	2%
	Improve police presence, response	2%
	Improve City-resident communication	2%
Q4	Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of Belvedere is doing to provide city services? Get answer, then ask: Would that be very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?	
	1 Very satisfied	39%
	2 Somewhat satisfied	46%
	3 Somewhat dissatisfied	8%
	4 Very dissatisfied	4%
	98 Not sure	2%
	99 Prefer not to answer	1%

Section 3: Initial Ballot Test

Next year, voters in Belvedere may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure.

Q5	To provide funding exclusively for:			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Fire protection and fire prevention services ◊ Emergency medical and paramedic services ◊ Quick responses to 9-1-1 emergencies ◊ And 24-hour ambulance services 			
	shall the City of Belvedere’s fire protection measure levying \$980 annually per residential unit (with other rates as described in the voter pamphlet) be adopted, raising approximately one million dollars per year until ended by voters, with annual adjustments, independent oversight, and all money locally-controlled?			
	If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? <i>Get answer, then ask: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?</i>			
	1	Definitely yes	16%	Skip to Q7
	2	Probably yes	25%	Skip to Q7
	3	Probably no	20%	Ask Q6
4	Definitely no	22%	Ask Q6	
98	Not sure	16%	Ask Q6	
99	Prefer not to answer	0%	Skip to Q7	
Q6	Is there a particular reason why you do not support or are unsure about the measure I just described? <i>If yes, ask: Please briefly describe your reason. Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below.</i>			
	Current levels of fire, emergency services are sufficient, already funded		25%	
	Need more information		24%	
	Taxes already too high		21%	
	Money is misspent, mismanaged		9%	
	Measure too expensive		8%	
	Other higher priorities in community		6%	
	Not sure / No reason in particular		5%	
	Other ways to be funded		2%	
	Do not trust City		2%	
	Money will go to admin salaries, pensions		2%	
	City has enough money		1%	
	Mentioned past ballot measures		1%	

Section 4: Tax Threshold							
Q7	The measure I just described would raise money through annual property taxes paid by residential and commercial property owners. However, the amount to be charged has not been finalized yet.						
	If you heard that your household would pay an additional _____ per year for your property, would you vote yes or no on the measure? <i>Get answer, then ask: Is that definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?</i>						
<i>Read in sequence starting with the highest amount (A), then the next highest (B). If respondent says 'definitely yes' to (A), record 'definitely yes' for (B) and go to Q8.</i>							
	<i>Ask in Order</i>	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	Probably No	Definitely No	Not Sure	Prefer not to answer
A	980 dollars	10%	27%	21%	28%	14%	0%
B	740 dollars	14%	28%	21%	24%	13%	1%
C	498 dollars	26%	22%	17%	19%	15%	1%

Section 5: Projects & Services							
Q8	The measure we've been discussing will provide funding for a variety of services in your community.						
	If the measure passes, would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: _____, or do you not have an opinion? <i>Get answer, if favor or oppose, then ask: Would that be strongly (favor/oppose) or somewhat (favor/oppose)?</i>						
	<i>Randomize</i>	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Provide fire protection and prevention services 24-hours per day	51%	19%	7%	8%	12%	3%
B	Provide emergency medical, paramedic, and ambulance service 24-hours per day	54%	18%	6%	9%	10%	3%
C	Provide quick responses to 9-1-1 emergencies	56%	14%	6%	11%	10%	3%
D	Educate the public on fire safety and ways to reduce fire hazards in their home	20%	26%	17%	23%	11%	3%
E	Replace outdated fire-fighting and life-saving equipment and supplies	47%	23%	7%	11%	9%	3%
F	Provide emergency communications and dispatch	42%	23%	9%	12%	12%	3%
G	Reduce the risk of wildfires	39%	24%	10%	15%	9%	3%
H	Maintain the financial viability of the City	37%	21%	9%	16%	13%	4%
I	Avoid cuts to other services provided by the City including police, crime prevention, and street maintenance	44%	20%	10%	15%	9%	3%

Section 6: Positive Arguments							
What I'd like to do now is tell you what some people are saying about the measure we've been discussing.							
Q9	Supporters of the measure say: ----- Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to SUPPORT the measure?						
	<i>Ask A, B, C, D first in that order, then randomize remaining items.</i>	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don't Believe	Not Sure	Prefer not to answer
A	In 1980, voters approved a Fire Tax to pay for full-time professional fire protection and emergency medical services. Over time, the cost of providing these services has increased to the point where the fire tax covers just <i>half</i> of the cost of the services.	24%	38%	18%	7%	7%	6%
B	In order to pay for the additional cost of fire protection and EMS services, the City has been forced to cut other service areas including police protection and street maintenance.	21%	29%	23%	13%	7%	7%
C	This measure is needed to cover the costs of fire protection services in full and avoid additional cuts to police, street maintenance, and other services in the future.	28%	25%	22%	11%	7%	7%
D	Without this measure, Belvedere may have to move to a part-time Police Department where at certain times there will be no officer on duty in Belvedere ready to respond to burglaries and other emergencies.	38%	13%	18%	18%	6%	7%
E	All money raised by the measure will be used to fund fire protection and emergency medical services here in Belvedere. By law, it can't be taken away by the State or used for other purposes.	40%	19%	19%	10%	6%	7%
F	There will be a clear system of accountability including independent oversight and annual reports to the community to ensure that the money is spent properly.	27%	25%	20%	15%	6%	7%
G	Fast emergency response times for 9-1-1 calls are critical for saving lives. This measure will ensure that we have the fire fighters, police officers, dispatchers, and paramedics needed to respond quickly to 9-1-1 emergencies.	40%	22%	17%	9%	5%	7%
H	Seniors have the most to gain from this measure because they are the most likely group to need fast, life-saving emergency medical care. More than 70% of the emergency calls in our community are for emergency medical and ambulance service.	25%	28%	25%	8%	7%	7%

I	When you need emergency care, you need it fast. Seconds can mean the difference between life and death. This measure will ensure you and your family continue to have rapid access to advanced life-saving medical care when you need it most.	39%	19%	19%	10%	6%	7%
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Section 7: Interim Ballot Test & Escalator

Sometimes people change their mind about a measure once they have more information about it. Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it again.

To provide funding exclusively for:

- ◊ Fire protection and fire prevention services
- ◊ Emergency medical and paramedic services
- ◊ Quick responses to 9-1-1 emergencies
- ◊ And 24-hour ambulance services

Q10 shall the City of Belvedere’s fire protection measure levying \$980 annually per residential unit (with other rates as described in the voter pamphlet) be adopted, raising approximately one million dollars per year until ended by voters, with annual adjustments, independent oversight, and all money locally-controlled?

If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? *Get answer, then ask: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?*

1	Definitely yes	18%
2	Probably yes	27%
3	Probably no	18%
4	Definitely no	25%
98	Not sure	12%
99	Prefer not to answer	0%

Q11 Local funding for fire and emergency medical services in Belvedere has not kept pace with the cost of providing the services, which is why the City has had to cut other services and is facing additional cuts in the future.

To solve this problem, the cost of the proposed measure would adjust annually by up to 6% to ensure that fire and emergency medical services are fully funded now and protected from cuts in the future. Knowing this, would you vote yes or no on this measure? *Get answer, then ask: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?*

1	Definitely yes	13%
2	Probably yes	28%
3	Probably no	24%
4	Definitely no	23%
98	Not sure	11%
99	Prefer not to answer	0%

Section 8: Negative Arguments

Next, let me tell you what opponents of the measure are saying.

Q12 Opponents of the measure say: ----- . Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE the measure?

	<i>Randomize</i>	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don't Believe	Not Sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Property owners are already paying a fire tax, as well as multiple other taxes, bonds, and assessments. Now they want us to pay <i>another</i> tax for fire protection? Enough is enough. We can't afford to keep raising our taxes.	46%	27%	18%	3%	4%	3%
B	Our community is already an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, and those on fixed incomes. Passing this tax will make it even less affordable.	41%	26%	22%	3%	5%	3%
C	Fire fighters are making too much money in salary, pensions and benefits – that's the problem. They can't keep raising the cost of services 6% year after year and expect that residents will agree to pay more taxes.	20%	18%	33%	16%	10%	4%
D	This measure allows the City Council to raise the tax rate every year without voter approval.	38%	23%	15%	9%	11%	3%
E	There is no expiration date on this tax – it will last forever.	44%	23%	16%	4%	10%	3%
F	Landlords will pass the cost of this tax through to renters, dramatically increasing rents which are already unaffordable.	28%	24%	30%	5%	9%	5%

Section 9: Final Ballot Test

Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it one more time.

Q13	To provide funding exclusively for:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Fire protection and fire prevention services ◇ Emergency medical and paramedic services ◇ Quick responses to 9-1-1 emergencies ◇ And 24-hour ambulance services 		
shall the City of Belvedere's fire protection measure levying \$980 annually per residential unit (with other rates as described in the voter pamphlet) be adopted, raising approximately one million dollars per year until ended by voters, with annual adjustments, independent oversight, and all money locally-controlled?			
If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? <i>Get answer, then ask:</i> Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?			
	1	Definitely yes	13%
	2	Probably yes	30%
	3	Probably no	20%
	4	Definitely no	26%
	98	Not sure	9%
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%

Section 10: Background & Demographics

Thank you so much for your participation. I have just two background questions for statistical purposes.

Q14	In your opinion, has the City of Belvedere done an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job of managing its financial resources?		
	1	Excellent	16%
	2	Good	35%
	3	Fair	23%
	4	Poor	6%
	5	Very poor	5%
	98	Not Sure	15%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%
Q15	In the past three years, has anyone in your household needed fire, emergency medical, or ambulance services in Belvedere?		
	1	Yes	24%
	2	No	73%
	99	Prefer not to answer	3%

Those are all of the questions that I have for you. Thanks so much for participating in this important survey.

Post-Interview & Sample Items

S1	Gender		
	1	Male	45%
	2	Female	47%
	3	Non-binary	0%
	99	Prefer not to answer	9%
S2	Party		
	1	Democrat	48%
	2	Republican	22%
	3	Other	5%
	4	DTS	25%
S3	Age on Voter File		
	1	18 to 29	9%
	2	30 to 39	6%
	3	40 to 49	15%
	4	50 to 64	27%
	5	65 or older	42%
S4	Registration Date		
	1	Since Nov 2018	17%
	2	Jun 2012 to before Nov 2018	13%
	3	Jun 2006 to before Jun 2012	8%
	4	Before June 2006	62%

S5 Household Party Type		
1	Single Dem	22%
2	Dual Dem	16%
3	Single Rep	8%
4	Dual Rep	6%
5	Single Other	12%
6	Dual Other	7%
7	Dem & Rep	6%
8	Dem & Other	12%
9	Rep & Other	12%
0	Mixed (Dem + Rep + Other)	0%
S6 Homeowner on Voter File		
1	Yes	72%
2	No	28%
S7 Likely to Vote by Mail		
1	Yes	86%
2	No	14%
S8 Likely March 2024 Voter		
1	Yes	83%
2	No	17%
S9 Likely November 2024 Voter		
1	Yes	100%
2	No	0%