

# Exit Poll



## East Bay Regional Park District Measure WW

Understanding Voter Behavior in the Face of a  
Unique Set of Challenges



**November 2008 Election Cycle**



*Research & Consulting for Strategic Planning*  
[www.sri-consulting.org](http://www.sri-consulting.org)

STRATEGY  
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## Section 1.0

## Executive Summary

Measure WW was successful, securing **71.8% voter support** (refer to Figure 1). The success of this \$500 mm. bond measure, which was a continuation of Measure AA (authorized by a “super majority” of East Bay voters in 1988), was in the face of a unique set of challenges. These challenges included:

- (i) Voter concern over a ***depressed economy*** and...
- (ii) The fact that the Alameda County Registrar of Voters ***mistakenly deleted*** the TITLE of the ballot language, which stated that passage of Measure WW would NOT increase the local Tax Rate.

As a result, while Alameda County historically far exceeds the requisite 2/3-voter support (typically around 78%) and voter support in Contra Costa County typically falls slightly BELOW 2/3-voter needed for passage (around 64% to 65%)...in the present case, the vote in BOTH counties virtually mirrored one another at approximately 72%.

The East Bay Regional Park District commissioned an **Exit Poll** designed to secure the form of “intelligence” needed to identify and understand the determinants of voting behavior under such extreme and unique conditions.

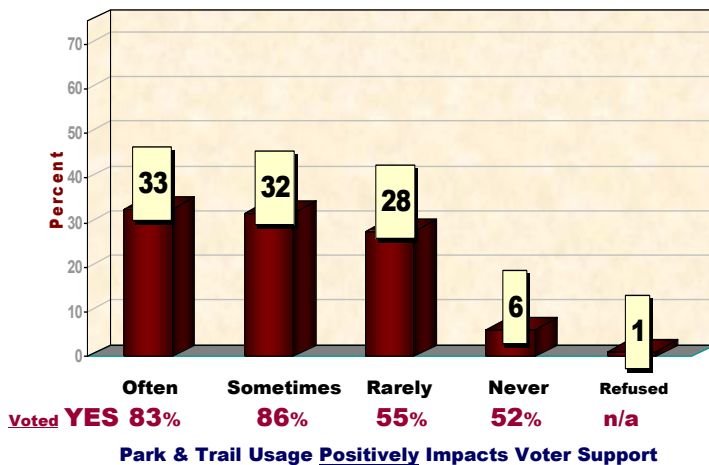
The purpose of the present document is to present the “findings” from this scientific survey of East Bay voters, which immediately followed the November 2008 election cycle...while one’s decision regarding how they voted was fresh in the respondents’ mind, especially the reason(s) that drove their decision about how to vote on **Measure WW**.

## Section 2.0 Key Findings

### 2.1 The District’s extensive efforts to BRAND the East Bay Regional Park District (move USERS beyond customer satisfaction to customer LOYALTY) is, in large part, responsible for weathering the storm.

In recent years, the District has made a concerted effort to properly BRAND the East Bay Regional Park District; in other words, to move USERS of the regional parks, trails, and programs BEYOND “satisfaction” to having a sense of LOYALTY toward the public Agency. It is this sense of loyalty toward the EBRPD among USERS that was, in large part, responsible for the District being able to *weather the storm* that resulted from the combination of the present economic slowdown and the faux pas on the part of the office of the Alameda County Registrar of Voters...thus, receive nearly 72% voter support for the \$500 regional park bond, Measure WW, that appeared on the November 2008 ballot.

#### How Frequently Use EBRPD Parks, Trails, and/or Recreation Facilities

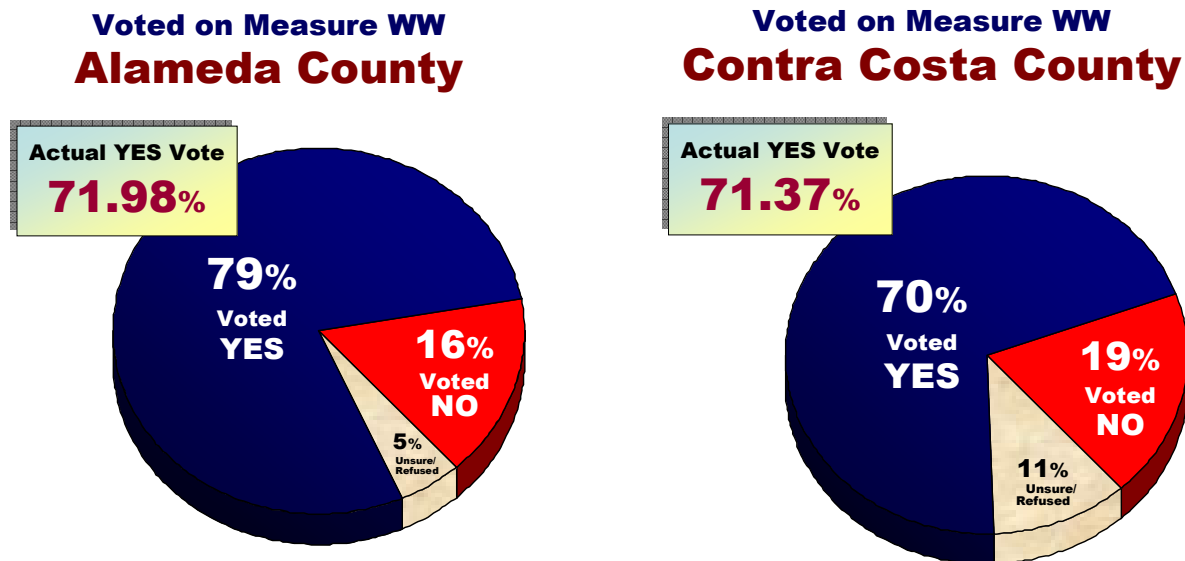


The empirical evidence that documents the above conclusion can be seen in the graphic at left (also, refer to Figure 8). Voter support among those who USE the EBRPD facilities/programs often or sometimes is in the mid-80’s percentile (83% and 86% YES, respectively); those who rarely or never use these facilities is slightly over half (55% and 52%, respectively).

**2.2 The impact on voting behavior (a YES vs. NO vote) on Measure WW from including in the TITLE of the ballot measure the fact that approval of the respective Measure would NOT increase the local tax rate was 6% to 7%.**

Historically, we know that voter support in Alameda County for a funding mechanism placed on the ballot by the East Bay Regional Park District is approximately 78% YES. In Contra Costa County, the YES vote has historically been slightly below the threshold for an initiative that requires super-majority support for passage (2/3rds voter support)...between 64% to 65% YES.

As can be seen in the graphics below (also, refer to Figures 3A & 3B), voter support in Alameda County for Measure WW virtually mirrored the YES vote in Contra Costa County, at approximately 72%.<sup>1</sup> In other words, voter support was approximately 6% lower than past results in Alameda County, and approximately 6% to 7% higher than past results in Contra Costa County.



<sup>1</sup> From a scientific perspective, the fact that 79% of the respondents in Alameda County said they voted YES when, in reality, slightly less than 72% actually voted YES, is NOT problematic. Sampling error for a sample of N=200 is ±5.5 to 7%; thus, this *finding* remains within statistical *margin of error*.

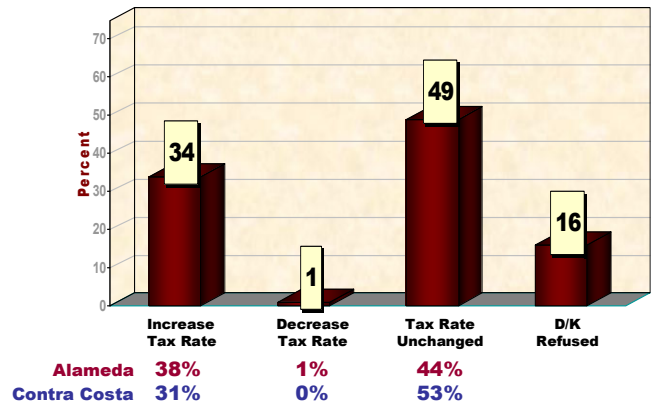


There are two pieces of empirical evidence that document the conclusion that deleting the TITLE from the ballot language in Alameda County had a significant impact (between 6% and 7%) on voting behavior with respect to Measure WW.

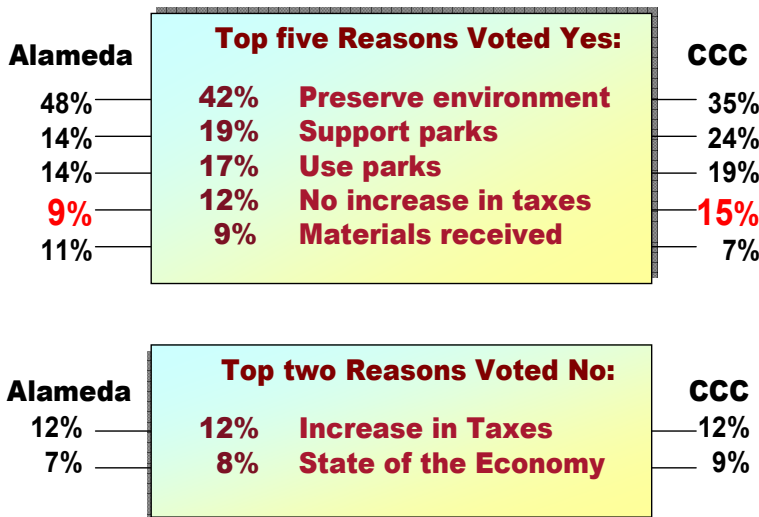
First, as can be seen in the graphic to the right (also, refer to Figure 5), seven percent more respondents in Alameda County than in Contra Costa County (38% vs. 31%, respectively) thought that, if approved, Measure WW would result in an increase in the local tax rate.

Second, as seen in the graphic below, left (also refer to Figure 4), 6% more voters in Contra Costa County understood that the approval of Measure WW **would NOT result** in an increase on the local tax rate.

**Believed Tax Measure Would:  
Increase Tax...Decrease Tax...  
or Tax Remain Unchanged?**



**Reasons Voted For/Against  
Measure WW**



The only material difference between what appeared on the ballot in both counties was that:

In **Alameda County**, staff in the Registrar of Voters' office **mistakenly deleted the TITLE** of the ballot measure, which stated that approval of the \$500 million bond measure would **NOT increase the local tax rate**.

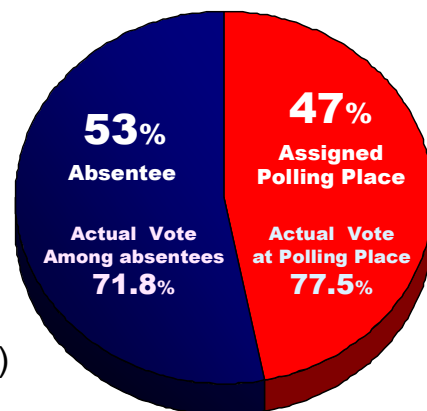
In **Contra Costa County**, this critical piece of information was included in the TITLE of the ballot language.

Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the impact on voting behavior of having critical information included in the TITLE (e.g., that the respective funding measure will NOT increase local tax rates), is between 6% and 7%.

### Absentee vs. Polling Place

#### 2.3 Support for Measure WW was stronger among Live vs. Absentee Votes

Votes cast at one’s voting place are called “live” votes; votes cast by mail are called “absentee” votes. As seen in the graphic at right (refer to Figure 2), while more people voted absentee than at their respective voting place (live vote), support for Measure WW was significantly greater among those who voted LIVE (77.5%) compared to those who voted ABSENTEE (71.8%).



#### 2.4 The driving force behind a YES vote in BOTH Alameda and Contra Costa Counties was a desire to preserve the environment



The findings reported in Figure 4 (see graphic at left) also shows what the driving force behind a YES vote was the same in BOTH Alameda and Contra Costa Counties; it was a desire to preserve the environment.

Support for regional parks, in general, and being a regional park/trail USER were, together, the second motivation force behind a YES vote. Interestingly, all three (3) determinants of a YES vote were much greater in Alameda County compared to Contra Costa County.

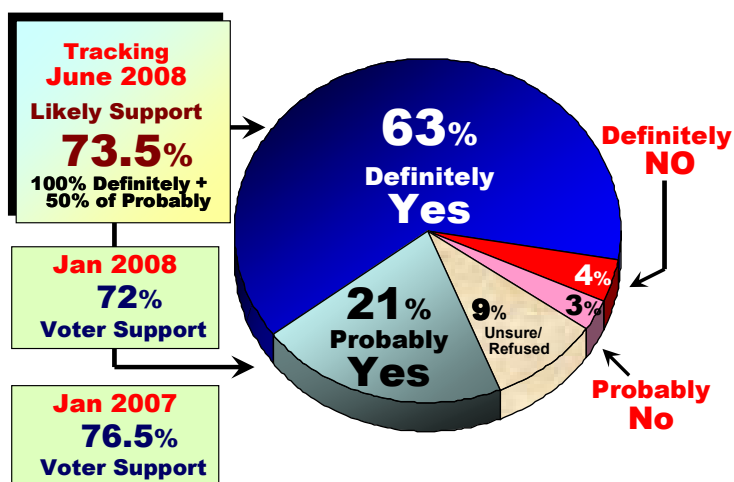
Park usage is perhaps more important than the above graphic suggests. How do we know this?

As can be seen in Figure 7, support for Measure WW, clearly is far greater among those who USE the regional park facilities (over 80% YES vote) compared to those who do NOT take advantage of these facilities (52% YES vote).

Finally, informational materials (both informational material sent out by the District and promotional literature sent out by the Campaign for YES on Measure WW) had a greater effect in Alameda County; however, this difference was NOT statistically significant (statistical significance begins at 3%).

**2.5 The Economic Slowdown had a significant, negative impact on voting behavior; but, NOT to the degree that was anticipated.**

Clearly, the economic slowdown had a major, negative impact on voter support for Measure WW; however, NOT to the degree that was anticipated. SRI was directed to conduct a BENCHMARK survey in 2007; as can be seen in the graphic below, voter support for the continuation of Measure AA at that point in time was 76.5%. A tracking poll one year later showed that voter support had deteriorated to 72%; however, by June 2008, when SRI conducted its final TRACKING survey...voter support had increased slightly, to 73.5%. The assumption at that point in time was that if the economy weakened further, voter support would deteriorate further, as well. No further tracking was done, so this matter was left to debate.



Clearly, the economy did decline further between June 2008 and the election in November 2008; as it turned out, however, voter support went back to the level that it was in January 2008...about 72% (specifically, 71.7%, see Figure 1).

What this means is that the impact of the downturn in the economy hit early in the psyche the East Bay electorate. By mid-year, 2008, East Bay voters understood that economic times would get worse; so, whatever damage had been done in terms of a collective desire to keep the Measure AA funding mechanism in place had been done. Thus, voter support returned to its lowest point; fortunately, this was well ABOVE the threshold 2/3rds voter support required for passage of Measure WW.

**2.6 Outreach efforts to INFORM local voters about Measure WW was central to securing super-majority support**

As anticipated, the ballot and the materials sent out to voters from the respective County Registrar of Voters' office was the primary source of information about Measure WW. We've already provided empirical evidence that

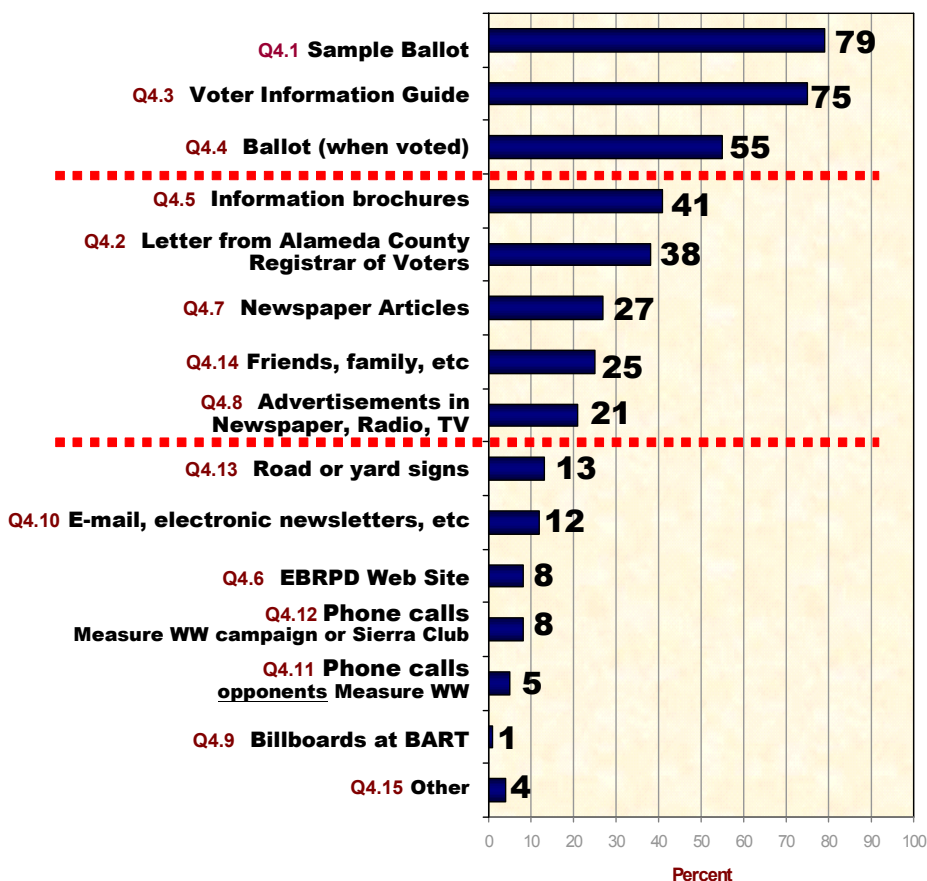


the content of the TITLE of the ballot measure had a marked impact on voting behavior.

As can be seen in the graphic below, left (also refer to Figure 7), however, **informational materials** sent out by the District and **promotional literature** sent out by the *YES of Measure WW* campaign also play key roles.

## Where Got Information Regarding Measure WW

Question 4 Series



The impact on voting behavior by various media basically fell into three (3) categories:

- **Sample ballot**, the **Ballot** itself, and the **Voter Information Guide**
- **Informational materials** from the District, from local media outlets, and from the Campaign.
- **Electronic media**, including the District’s Web Site, electronic billboards, and a telephone effort by BOTH the proponents and the opponents of Measure WW.

The final sections of the present document presents the “findings” from the present research effort in a slightly different form.

**Addendum ‘A’** contains a comprehensive set of charts, graphs, and tables, wherein the empirical *findings* from this scientific survey are presented.

**Addendum ‘B’** contains a copy of the research instrument (questionnaire) showing percentages for each question asked in the present survey.

**Addendum 'C'** contains a brief discussion of the Research Design and Methodology employed in the present study.

In addition, a **Book of Cross-tabs** has been provided to the Client; thus, you will be able to see differences and similarities in the collective perceptions, attitudes, and core values of respondents in the present survey, based upon such demographic determinants as gender, level of education, household income, ethnicity, and more.

The “intelligence” contained in the present document is intended to assist the **East Bay Regional Park District**, and other stakeholders, in better understanding the dynamics of any given effort to place a funding measure on the local ballot; especially those, like Measure WW, that require super-majority support in order for the respective funding mechanism to be authorized.



**Addendum 'A'**

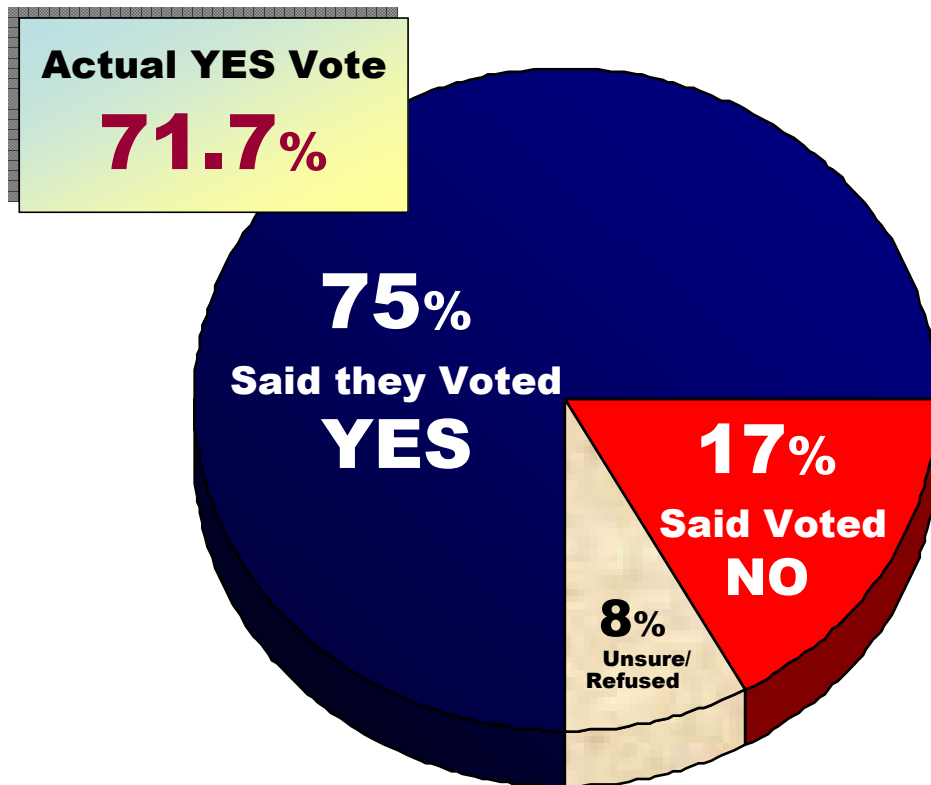
Figure 1  
Measure WW  
November 2008

**How Voted on Measure WW**  
**ALL VOTERS**

**Contra Costa & Alameda Counties**

**N=400**

*Margin of Error*  
**±5.5 to 7%**



**Well within...**

**Margin of Error**

**Thus, Can have CONFIDENCE in 'findings' from present voter survey**



Figure 2  
Measure WW  
November 2008

## Absentee vs. Polling Place

**Question 1.1:** Did you vote Absentee or at your Assigned Polling Place?

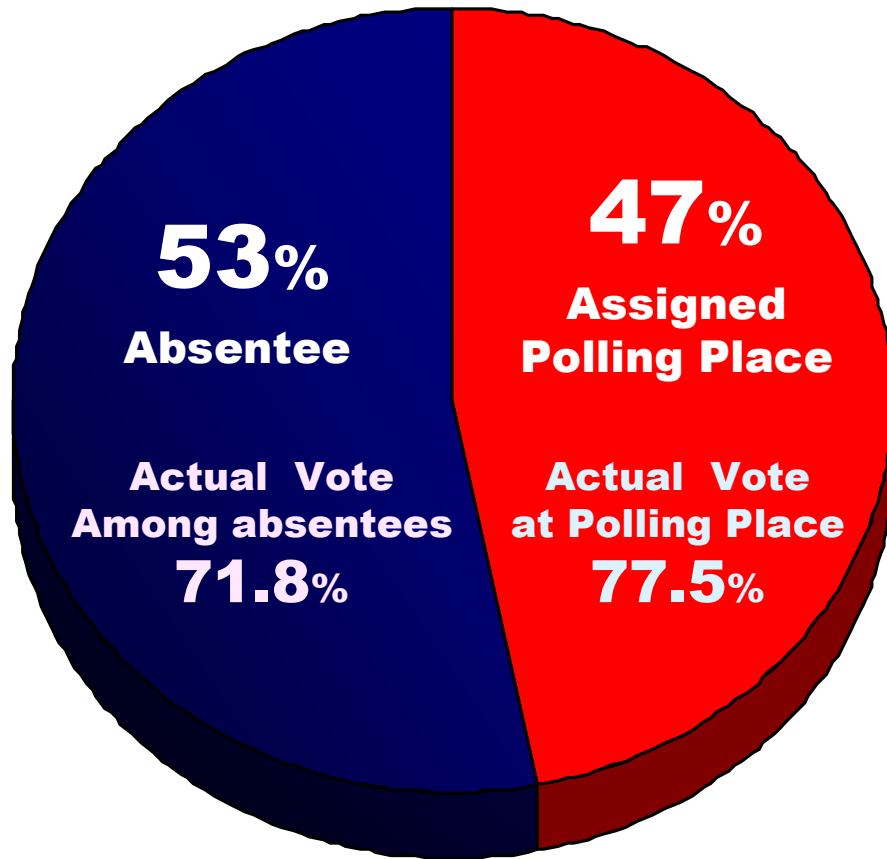


Figure 3A  
Measure WW  
November 2008

## Voted on Measure WW Alameda County

**N=200**

*Margin of Error*

**±5.5 to 7%**

**Question 2.1 Alameda County:** Did you vote YES or NO on Measure WW?

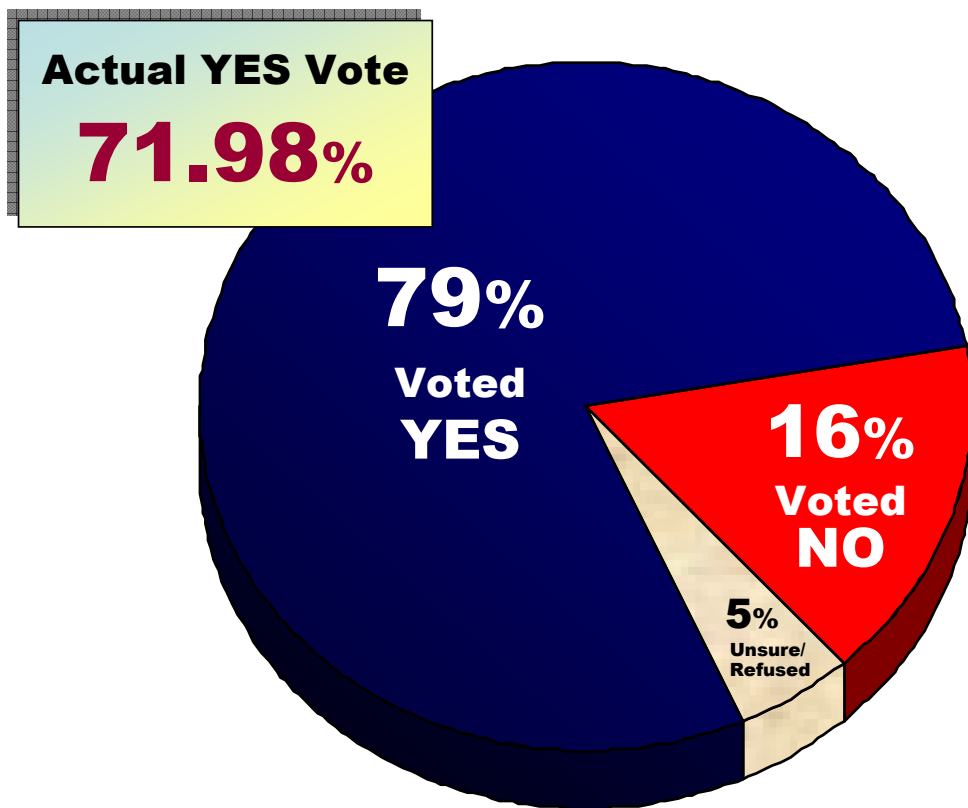




Figure 3B  
Measure WW  
November 2008

# Voted on Measure WW Contra Costa County

**N=200**  
*Margin of Error*  
**±5.5 to 7%**

**Question 2.1 Alameda County:** Did you vote YES or NO on Measure WW?

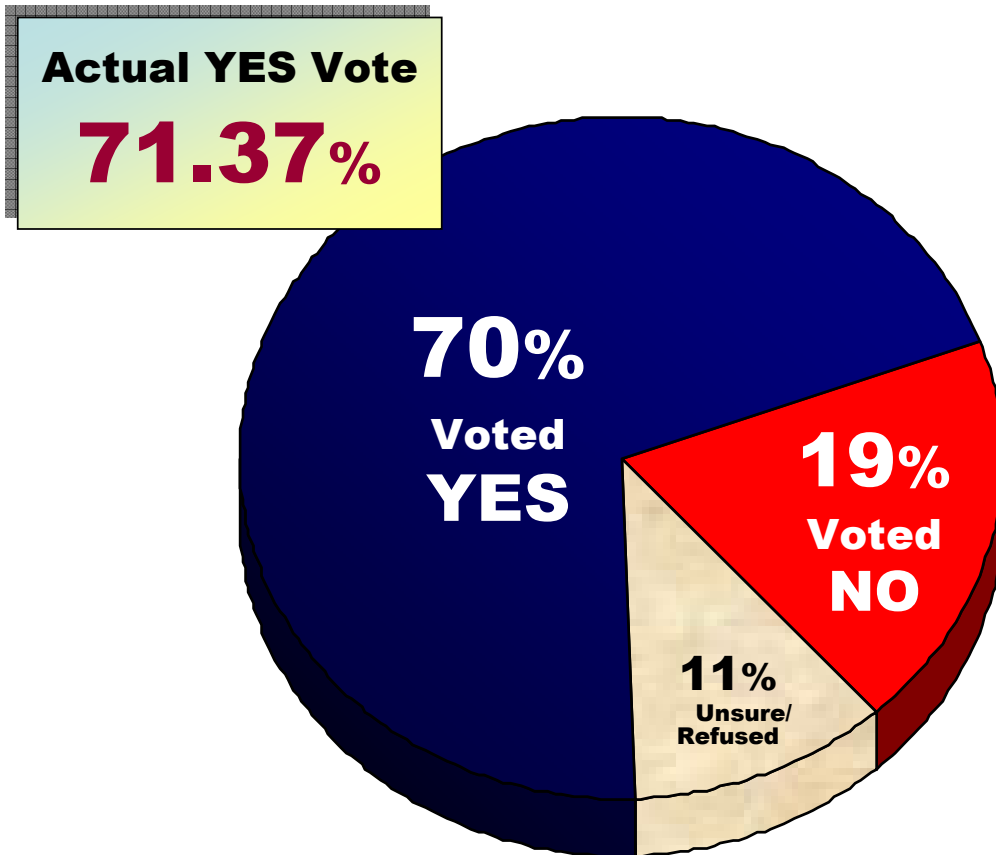


Figure 4  
**Measure WW**  
 November 2008

## Reasons Voted For/Against Measure WW

**Question 3.0:** Regardless of whether you voted YES or NO, what were the two or three reasons that lead to your decision of how to vote?

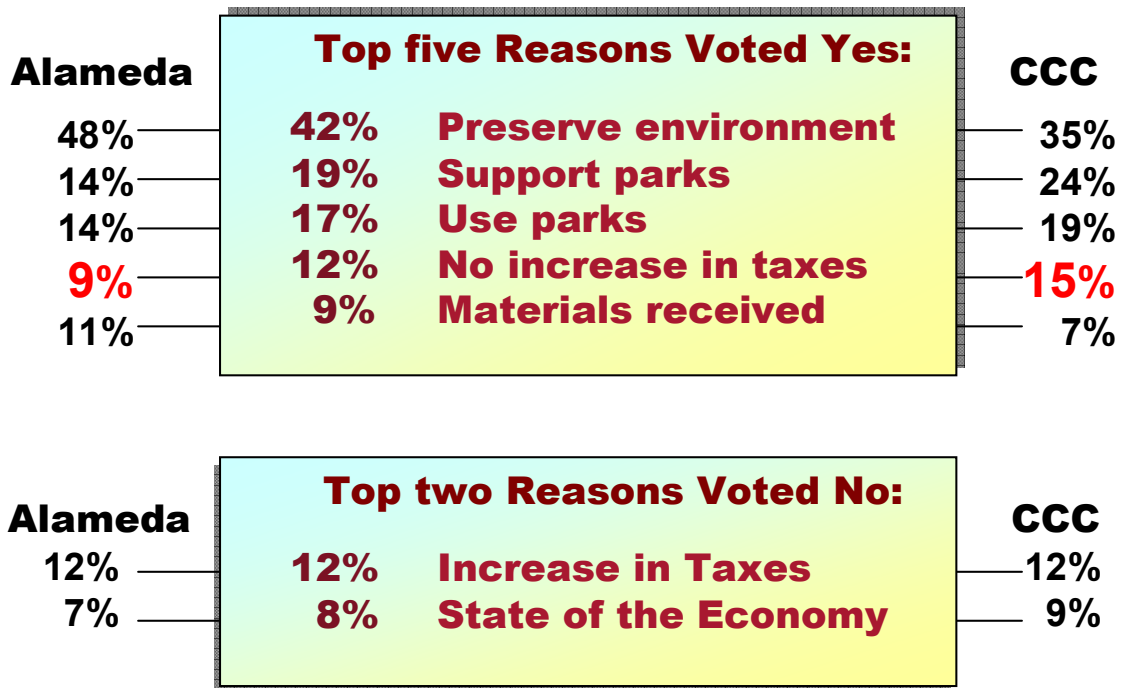


Figure 5  
**Measure WW**  
 November 2008

## Believed Tax Measure Would: Increase Tax...Decrease Tax... or Tax Remain Unchanged?

**Question 3.1:** When you voted, did you think that Measure WW, if approved, would increase the Tax Rate or decrease the Tax Rate in Alameda/Contra Costa County; or, would the Tax Rate remain unchanged?

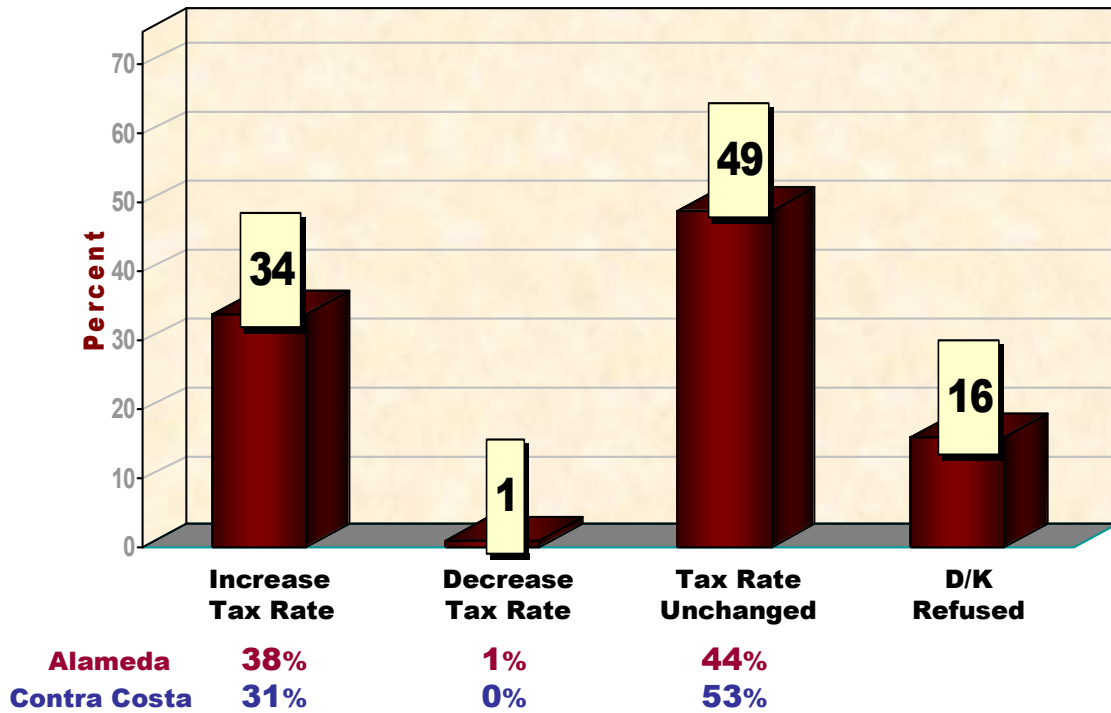


Figure 6  
Measure WW  
November 2008

## Impact of... State of the Economy on Voting Behavior

**Question 3.2:** Did the State of the Economy, today, have a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect at all on your decision of how to vote on Measure WW?

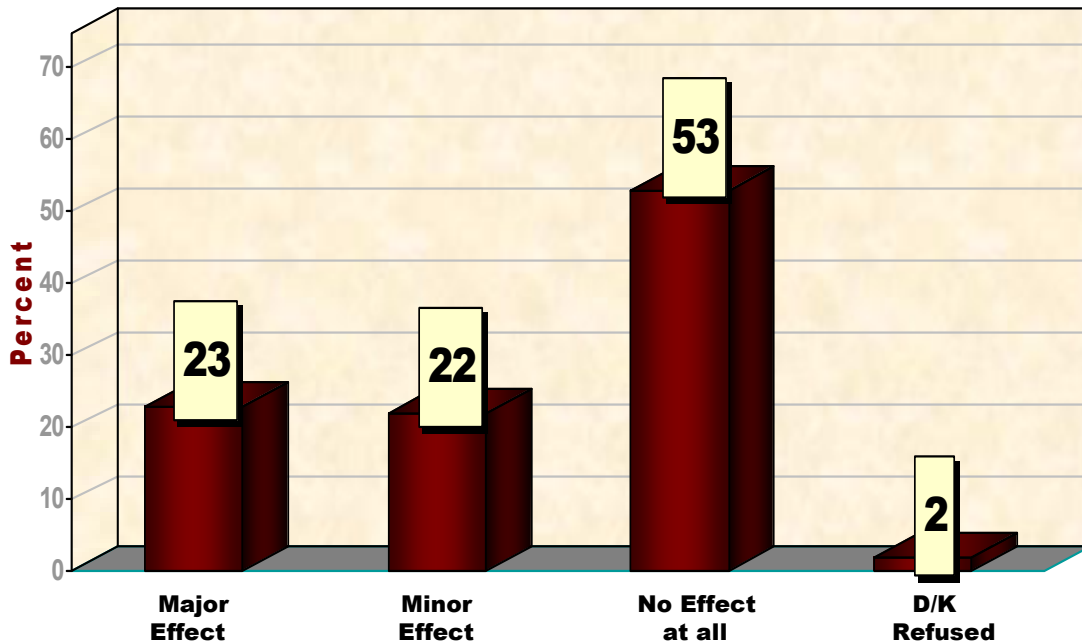


Figure 7  
Measure WW  
November 2008

# Where Got Information Regarding Measure WW

## Question 4 Series

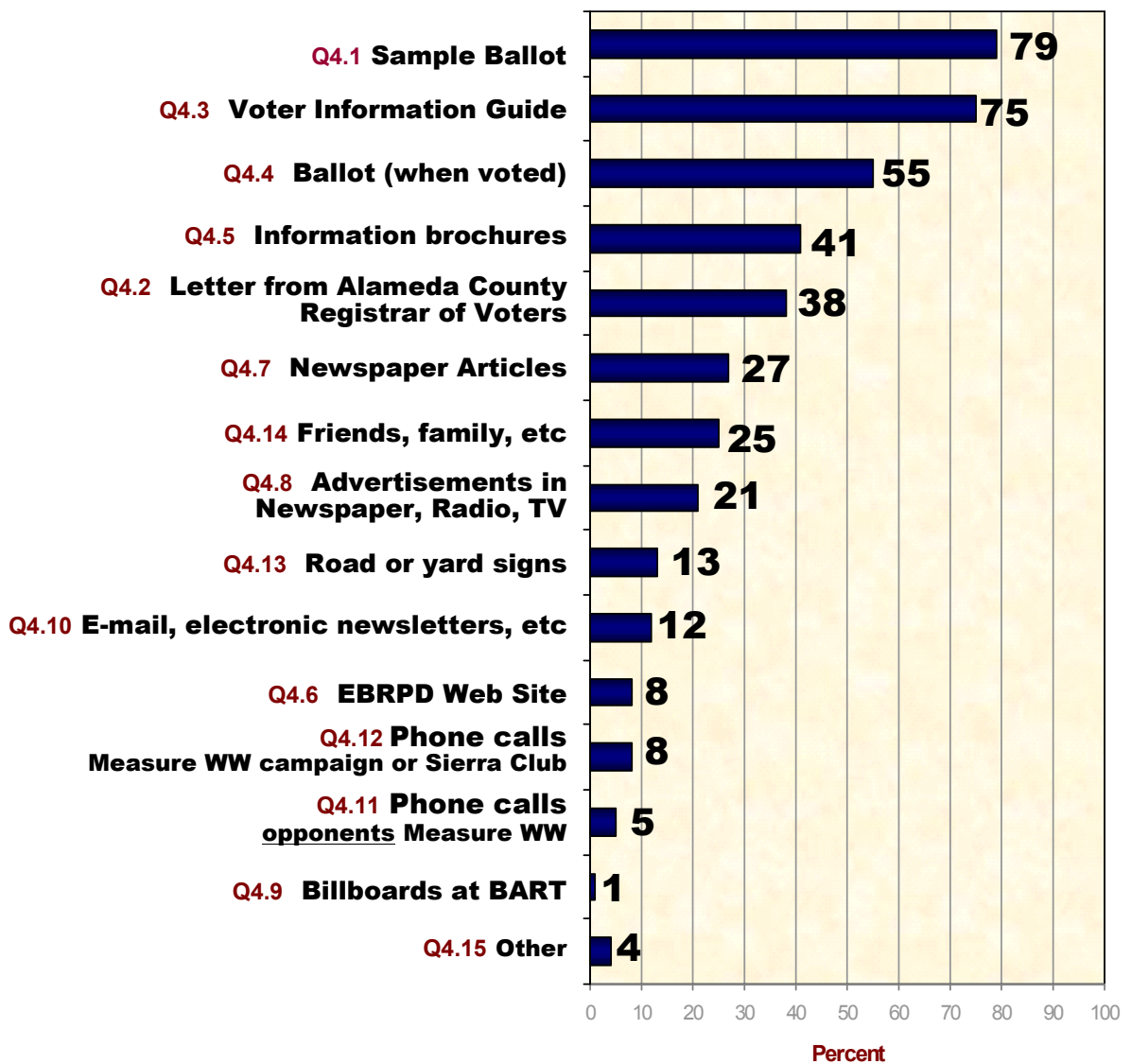




Figure 8  
**Measure WW**  
November 2008

## **How Frequently Use EBRPD Parks, Trails, and/or Recreation Facilities**

**Question 5.0:** How frequently do you or members of your family visit or use any of the parks, recreation facilities and/or trails provided through the EBRPD?

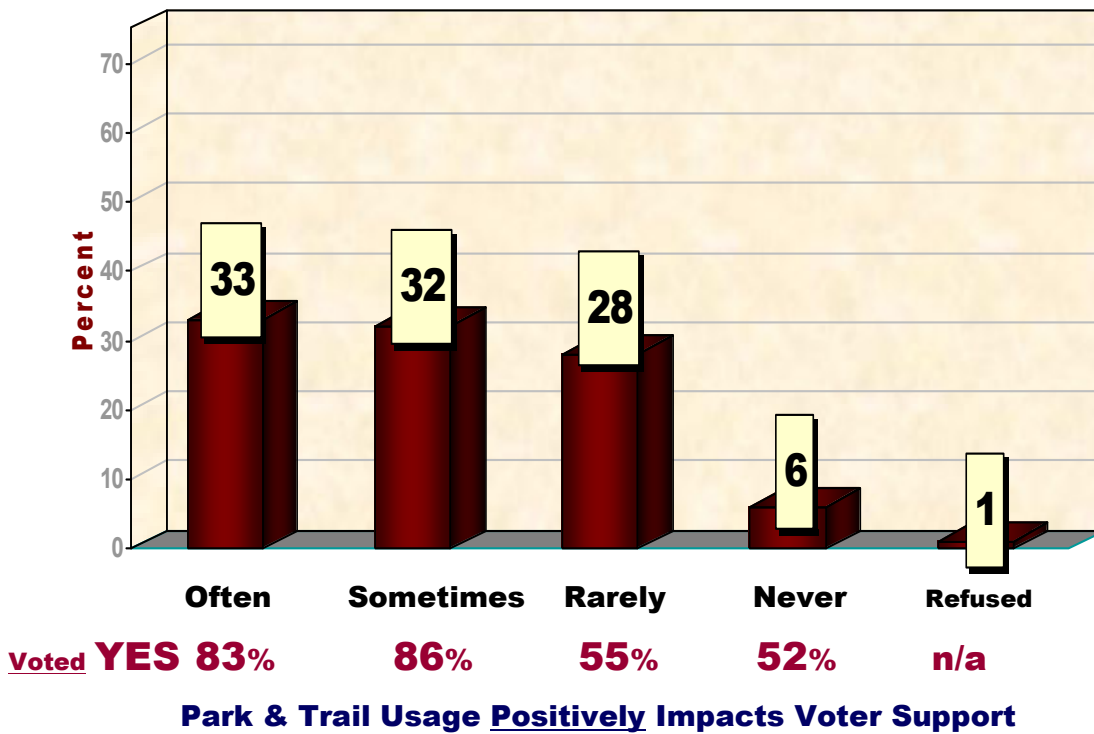


Figure 9  
**Measure WW**  
 November 2008

## Demographics

<b>Age</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>YES</b>
18 to 30 years	10%	83%
31 to 40 years	13%	84%
41 to 50 years	19%	77%
51 to 65 years	29%	73%
Over 65 years	22%	70%
Refused	7%	n/a

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>YES</b>
Caucasian	71%	75%
Hispanic	6%	68%
Black	6%	80%
Asian	7%	79%
Other	2%	63%
Refused	8%	n/a

<b>Education</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>YES</b>
Less High	1%	100%
High School	7%	68%
Some College	27%	71%
College Grad	36%	74%
Grad School	26%	82%
Refused	3%	n/a

<b>Income</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>YES</b>
Under \$25K	7%	59%
\$25-50K	16%	73%
\$50-\$75K	14%	83%
\$75-100K	12%	75%
Over \$100K	30%	79%
Refused	21%	n/a

<b>Home Ownership</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>YES</b>
Own	74%	72%
Rent	20%	83%
Refused	6%	n/a

<b>Ideology</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>YES</b>
Liberal	45%	87%
Moderate	25%	70%
Conservative	19%	53%
Refused	7%	n/a

<b>Gender</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>YES</b>
Male	35%	73%
Female	65%	76%



**Addendum ‘B’**



**East Bay Regional Park District  
Exit Poll, Measure WW**

November 4, 2008 Election Cycle

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**N=400 EAST BAY VOTERS**  
**Margin of Error: ±4% to 5%**

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY: N=200; Margin of Error 5.5% to 7%**

**ALAMEDA COUNTY: N=200; ; Margin of Error 5.5% to 7%**

HELLO. MY NAME IS \_\_\_\_\_ AND I AM WITH THE **SURVEY RESEARCH INSTITUTE**. WE ARE CONDUCTING A BRIEF EXIT POLL REGARDING TODAY’S (or Tuesday’s, if interview is being conducted on Wednesday) ELECTION RESULTS. WOULD YOU MIND TAKING FIVE MINUTES TO ANSWER A FEW VERY BRIEF QUESTIONS?

1.0 First, may I ask whether or not you voted in today’s elections (or Tuesday’s election, if interview is being conducted on Wednesday).

All	CC	AC	
100%	100%	100%	<b>YES</b> (Go on to Q1.1)

**NO**(Terminate interview)

1.1 Did you vote Absentee or at your Assigned Polling Place?

All	CC	AC	
53%	58%	48%	Absentee
47%	42%	52%	Voted at Assigned Polling Place

**NOTE TO INTERVIEWER:**  
Ask 2.0-CC of **Contra Costa County** Voters ONLY

2.0-CC Do you recall voting on **Measure WW**, a Bond Measure asking voters to: **Extend Existing East Bay Regional Park district Bond**, with **NO INCREASE IN TAX RATE**?

100%	<b>Yes</b> [Continue with Q 2.1]
	<b>No</b> [Terminate Interview]

**NOTE TO INTERVIEWER:**  
Ask 2.0-A of **Alameda County** Voters ONLY

2.0-A Do you recall voting on **Measure WW**, a Bond Measure asking voters to: **Continue restoring urban creeks; protect wildlife; purchase and save open space, wetlands and shoreline; acquire, develop and improve local and regional parks, trails and recreational facilities...by authorizing up to five hundred million dollars in general obligation bonds...provided that property tax rates will NOT increase beyond present rates?**

100%	<b>Yes</b> [Continue with Q 2.1]
	<b>No</b> [Terminate Interview]

2.1 Did you vote YES or NO on Measure WW?

All	CC	AC	
75%	70%	79%	Voted <b>YES</b>
17%	19%	16%	Voted <b>NO</b>
8%	11%	5%	DK/Refused ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> this response)

3.0 Regardless of whether you voted YES or NO, what were the two or three reasons that lead to your decision of how to vote?

**REASONS VOTED YES**

42%	Preserve environment
19%	Support parks
17%	Use parks
12%	No increase in taxes
9%	Materials received
2%	Recommendation by friend/family
2%	Good idea
7%	Don't remember
4%	Miscellaneous

**REASONS VOTED NO**

12%	Increase in taxes
8%	Economy
1%	Don't know
<1%	Materials received
3%	Miscellaneous

3.1 When you voted, did you think that Measure WW, if approved, would **increase** the Tax Rate or **decrease** the Tax Rate in Alameda/Contra Costa County; or, would the Tax Rate **remain unchanged**?

**NOTE TO CATI PROGRAMMERS:**  
 Program this, so that voters in Alameda & Contra Costs Counties are only asked about the County where they reside

All	CC	AC	
34%	31%	38%	<b><u>Increase</u> Tax Rate</b>
1%	0%	1%	<b><u>Decrease</u> Tax Rate</b>
49%	53%	44%	Tax Rate would remain <b><u>UNCHANGED</u></b>
16%	16%	17%	DK/Refused ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> this response)

3.2 Did the **state of the economy**, today, have a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect at all on your decision of how to vote on Measure WW?

All	CC	AC	
23%	26%	20%	<b><u>Major Effect</u></b>
22%	18%	26%	<b><u>Minor Effect</u></b>
53%	54%	53%	<b><u>NO EFFECT</u> at all</b>
2%	2%	1%	DK/Refused ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> this response)

4.0 Where did you get information regarding Measure WW? (Mark all that apply)

**NOTE TO INTERVIEWER:**  
 ROTATE the order in which you read the list of local concerns, 4.1 thru 4.9

	YES	NO	unsure/dk/ Refused	
4.1 Sample Ballot	79%	18%	3%	All
	82%	14%	4%	CC
	76%	21%	3%	AC
4.2 Letter from Alameda County <b>Registrar of Voters</b> ( <b>Note:</b> Ask Q4.2 ONLY of Alameda County voters)	38%	46%	16%	All
	n/a	n/a	n/a	CC
	38%	46%	16%	AC
4.3 Voter Information Guide	75%	20%	5%	All
	78%	16%	6%	CC
	73%	23%	4%	AC
4.4 Ballot (when you voted)	55%	41%	4%	All
	55%	41%	4%	CC
	56%	41%	3%	AC
4.5 Informational brochures sent through the mail	41%	52%	7%	All
	41%	52%	7%	CC
	41%	52%	7%	AC
4.6 EBRPD Web Site	8%	90%	2%	All
	6%	91%	3%	CC
	10%	89%	1%	AC
4.7 Newspaper Articles	27%	69%	4%	All
	29%	68%	3%	CC
	26%	71%	3%	AC
4.8 Advertisements in the newspaper, on radio, or on TV	21%	73%	6%	All
	25%	71%	4%	CC
	17%	75%	8%	AC
4.9 Electronic billboards at a BART station	1%	97%	2%	All
	0%	99%	1%	CC
	1%	96%	3%	AC
4.10 e-mail, electronic newsletters, blogs, or other computer-based communications?	12%	86%	2%	All
	10%	89%	1%	CC
	14%	84%	2%	AC



		YES	NO	unsure/dk/ Refused	
4.11	Phone call from opponents to Measure WW	5%	91%	4%	All
		4%	92%	4%	CC
		7%	90%	3%	AC
4.12	Phone call from Measure WW campaign or Sierra Club	8%	83%	9%	All
		9%	83%	8%	CC
		8%	82%	10%	AC
4.13	Road Signs or yard signs	13%	83%	4%	All
		13%	84%	3%	CC
		14%	82%	4%	AC
4.14	Friends, family members, or other acquaintances	25%	74%	1%	All
		26%	73%	1%	CC
		24%	75%	1%	AC
4.15	Other	5%	94%	1%	All
		4%	95%	1%	CC
		6%	93%	1%	AC

5.0 How frequently do you or members of your family visit or use any of the parks, recreation facilities and/or trails provided through the East Bay Regional Park District? Would that be **often**, **sometimes**, **rarely** or **never**?

All	CC	AC	
33%	30%	36%	Often (once per week or more)
32%	33%	31%	Sometimes (once per month)
28%	29%	27%	Rarely (less than once per month)
6%	7%	5%	Never
1%	1%	1%	DK/Refused (DO NOT READ this response)

8.0 Do you own or rent your home?

All	CC	AC	
74%	80%	68%	Own
20%	14%	27%	Rent
6%	6%	5%	Refused

9.0 How many years of school have you completed?

All	CC	AC	
1%	0%	1%	less than High School
7%	10%	4%	High School graduate (or Trade School)
27%	28%	27%	Some college
36%	32%	40%	College graduate
26%	26%	26%	Graduate school, Professional school
3%	4%	2%	DK/Refused (DO NOT READ this response)

10.0 Using the traditional political labels would you describe yourself as **liberal**, **moderate**, or **conservative**?

All	CC	AC	
45%	37%	54%	liberal
29%	34%	24%	moderate
19%	23%	14%	conservative
7%	6%	8%	Refused

11.0 Into what range does your annual household income fall?

All	CC	AC	
7%	4%	10%	under \$25,000
16%	16%	16%	between \$25,000 and \$50,000
14%	14%	15%	between \$50,000 and \$75,000
12%	12%	12%	between \$75,000 and \$100,000
30%	28%	32%	over \$100,000
21%	26%	15%	Refused

12.0 What is your age?

All	CC	AC	
10%	8%	13%	18 to 30 years
13%	6%	18%	31 to 40 years
19%	18%	21%	41 to 50 years
29%	32%	25%	51 to 65 years
22%	27%	18%	Over 65 years
7%	9%	5%	Refused

13.0 What is your ethnic background?

All	CC	AC	
71%	78%	65%	Caucasian
6%	5%	6%	Hispanic
6%	4%	9%	African American or Black
7%	2%	11%	Asian
2%	2%	2%	Other
8%	9%	7%	Refused

14.0 In what city do you reside?

ALAMEDA COUNTY

Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Castro Valley, Dublin, El Cerrito, Emeryville, Fremont, Hayward, Kensington, Newark, Oakland, Piedmont, Pleasanton, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Sunol, Union City

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Alamo, Antioch, Bay Point, Brentwood, Clayton, Concord, Danville, Diablo, Discovery Bay, El Cerrito, El Sobrante, Hercules, Kensington, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley, Orinda, Pinole, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Richmond, Rodeo, San Pablo, San Ramon, Valley Springs, Walnut Creek

Thank the interviewee for participating in the survey and politely say "Good-bye."

**DO NOT READ THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS; SIMPLY RECORD THE INFORMATION.**

15.0 Gender of respondent?

All CC AC

65% 65% 65% Female

35% 35% 35% Male

16.0 County

All

50% Alameda

50% Contra Costa

November 2008 Election Cycle

## Addendum 'C'

### Research Design and Methodology

The present research effort adheres strictly to “**The Scientific Method**,” as do all SRI studies.

The telephone survey was comprised of N=400 completed interviews of all registered voters throughout the East Bay. At 95% confidence level, an N=400 yields *sampling error* of  $\pm 4\%$  to 5%.

Thus, the “findings” from the present research effort are highly “representative” of the population from which the sample was drawn.

By working closely with David Collins, Asst. General Manager, Management Services, SRI researchers were able to create a research instrument (questionnaire) tailored to the needs and expectations of the East Bay Regional Park District.<sup>2</sup> The research instrument was then “pre-tested”; appropriate adjustments were made, and the survey was entered into the field. Of course, special care was taken to ensure that appropriate measurement “scales” were employed in order to maximize both the *reliability* and *validity* of the responses.

Data collection began election night, November 4, 2008; and continued through the following day, November 5, 2008, until the requisite number of interviews were completed. After the data were gathered, they were analyzed using a statistical package called SPSS, which accommodates the application of both **descriptive** and **advanced** statistical analyses. We then created the appropriate graphs, charts, and tables; finally, we prepared the present document for use by the District.

Should additional analysis and/or interpretation of the “findings” be desired by the District, SRI will happily do so and in a timely fashion.



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<sup>2</sup> Addendum 'B' contains the final research instrument (questionnaire) showing percentages for each of the questions incorporated into the study.