



SAN MATEO COUNTY
**Transportation
Authority**

Regional Transit Measure

Transportation Authority Board Meeting
Jessica Epstein, Director Government and Community Affairs
March 6, 2025



Regional Measure Timeline

Recent Meetings:

- MTC Legislative Committee Meeting – Feb. 14
- SamTrans and TA Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting with staff – Feb. 14
- MTC Full Commission Meeting – Feb. 26

Next Steps:

- MTC Commission Chair to meet with bill authors – Sen. Weiner and Arreguin
- Bill language must be submitted by late March
- Independent audit of transit operators with deficits is expected late March
- Goes to Senate Transportation Committee, likely others
- Must be approved by both Senate and Assembly



MTC Sponsored Regional Measure

Scenario 1A – Core Transit Framework for 10 years

- 10-year, ½-cent sales tax for Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties, Opt-in option for Santa Clara County
- 90% for transit operations throughout measure, 10% to transit transformation

Revised Scenario 2/Hybrid

- 30-year, 9 county, combines ½ cent sales tax with 0.18% payroll tax or \$0.09 per square foot parcel tax
- Funds 90% of operator-reported shortfalls for Years 1-8 and declines over time, while county flex grows 10% to transit transformation



MTC Transportation Revenue Measure Principles

The measure must:

- **Be passable**
 - Up to ½ cent with clear path for Citizen’s Initiative, supported by essential elected leaders/constituents
- **Prevent major transit service cuts for regional operators**
 - Avoid major service cuts from multi-county transit operators and local operators with operating deficit
- **Take local transportation funding needs into consideration**
 - Timing determined with participating agencies with a tax measure expiring in next 10 years
- **Advance transit transformation: fund & deliver rider-focused improvements**
 - Mandate that operators receiving funds report on and comply with MTC Transit Transformation
- **Ensure fairness**
 - Counties with regional operator must participate in regional measure or fund fair share through alternative source
- **Include meaningful accountability measures**
 - Transparency on how funds are used and oversight of transit agency financials



Impacts of ½ Cent New Sales Tax in SMC

Atherton 9.375%

Belmont 9.875%

Brisbane 9.875%

Burlingame 9.625%

Colma 9.375%

Daly City 9.875%

East Palo Alto 9.875%

Foster City 9.375%

Half Moon Bay 9.375%

Hillsborough 9.375%

Menlo Park 9.375%

Millbrae 9.375%

Pacifica 9.875%

Portola Valley 9.375%

Redwood City 9.875%

San Bruno 9.875%

San Carlos 9.375%

San Mateo 9.625%

South San Francisco 9.875%

Woodside 9.375%

Unincorporated SMC 9.375%

- 10 cities (50%) will reach 10% sales tax rate if additional 1/2 cents MTC Regional Measure successfully passes; special legislation required to authorize this
- By population, this means 66% of SMC residents would live in a city with a 10% sales tax if passed



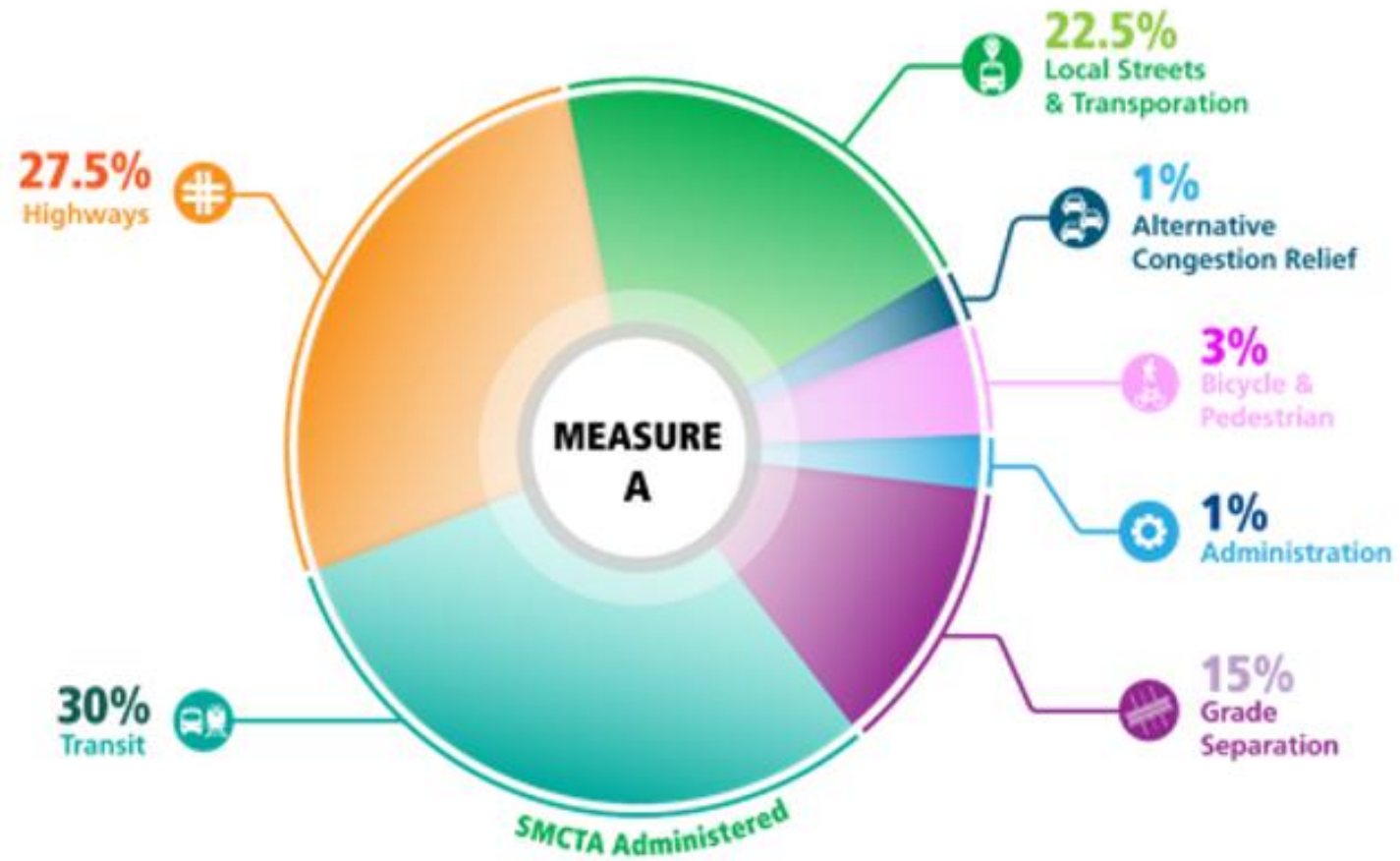
When Measures Expire

- For reference: Estimated renewal years for transportation ballot measures in San Mateo County

	Expiration Year	Est. Renewal Year	Est. Annual Revenue	Type	Administrated by:
Measure A	2033	2028	\$120M	.5% sales tax	SMCTA
Measure M	2035	2032	\$7M	\$10 vehicle registration fee	C/CAG
Measure W	2048	2044	\$120M	.5% sales tax	SMCTA & SamTrans
Measure RR	2050	2048	\$30M	.125% sales tax	Caltrain



What Measure A Funds



San Mateo County Priorities

A successful ballot measure must:

- Have a simple and limited scope
- Preserve and protect the ability to self-fund
- Prioritize fair geographic distribution
- Enhance accountability and oversight
- Give counties authority over funding decisions
- Allow San Mateo County to opt-in

Top priorities include:

- Protection of local transportation revenue measures
- Continued responsible fiscal management of SamTrans bus/paratransit and its suite of services
- Protection of Caltrain service (approx. \$30M per year from SMC for Caltrain); funding needed soon



MTC Poll Takeaways

Support for the 4 county ½ cent sales tax and variable rate measures “*exceeds a majority but falls far short of the two-thirds threshold, indicating the **likely path for a transit measure would be via a citizen’s initiative***”

- All counties poll above 50% which would succeed as a citizen’s initiative but fail at 2/3
- MTC proposal designed to create new district; could be used for signature gathering
- SMC signature requirement over 40,000; cost per signature range from \$10-\$20
- Lawsuit potential, no district-based signature gathering precedent

Key takeaway – Citizen’s initiatives costly and untested for multi-county measures, though if successful it is most likely option to pass



MTC Poll Takeaways

“Overall framing and details of the measures do little to build support.”

- Messaging alone does not move voters
- Poll did not ask SMC voters’ opinion on funding by transit agencies

Key takeaway – Polling and/or expenditure Plan development process needed to clarify community priorities

*“Although there is interest in preventing cuts to transit, **voters are simply hesitant to raise taxes and lack trust that more money is the solution.**”*

- No information on new tax increase below ½ cent
- No information on regional measure impact to Measure A renewal

Key takeaway – SMC specific polling needed to understand risks and opportunities



MTC Polling Data

Conducted by: EMC Research

Poll scenarios:

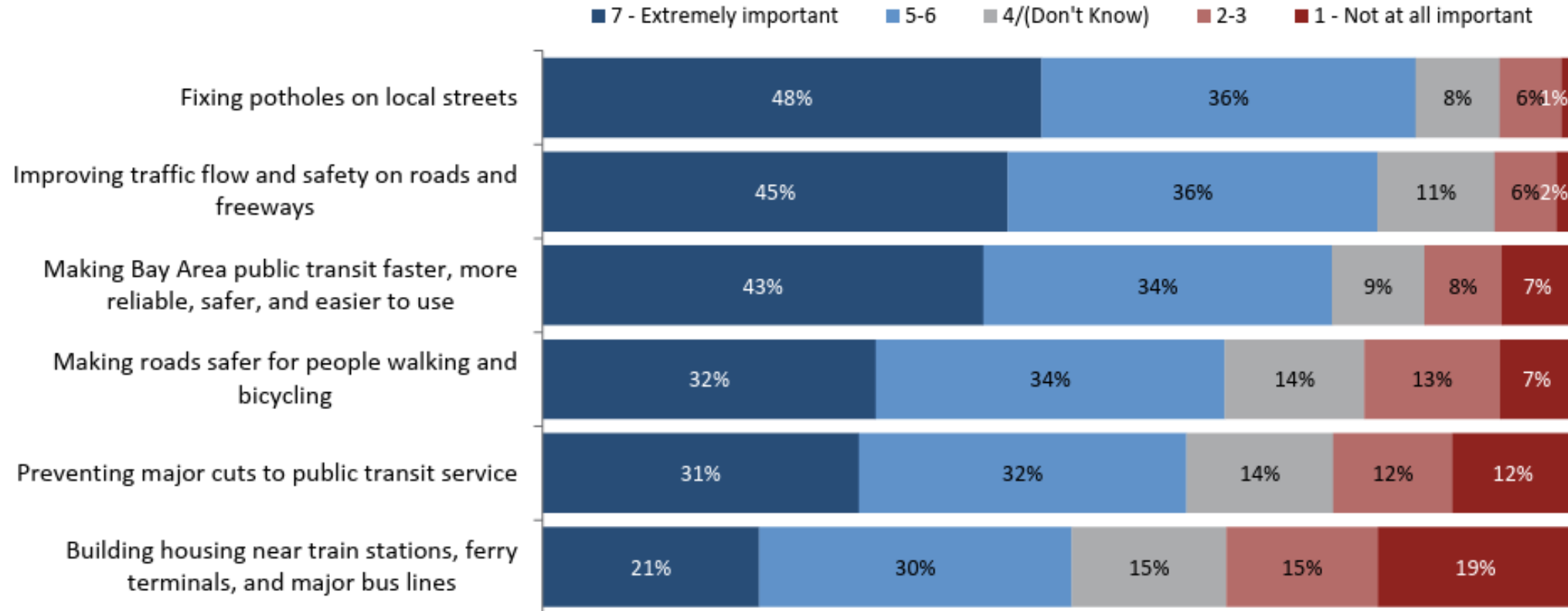
- Four County - ½ cent sales tax
- Variable – ½- ⅞ cent sales tax
- Hybrid – ½ cent sales tax plus \$.09 per building sq ft parcel tax

Margin of error:

- MTC polled 200 San Mateo County individuals for each scenerio, a total of 600 SMC residents for all three scenerios combined
- 6.9% margin of error for each scenerio in SMC



Issue Importance – 9 County



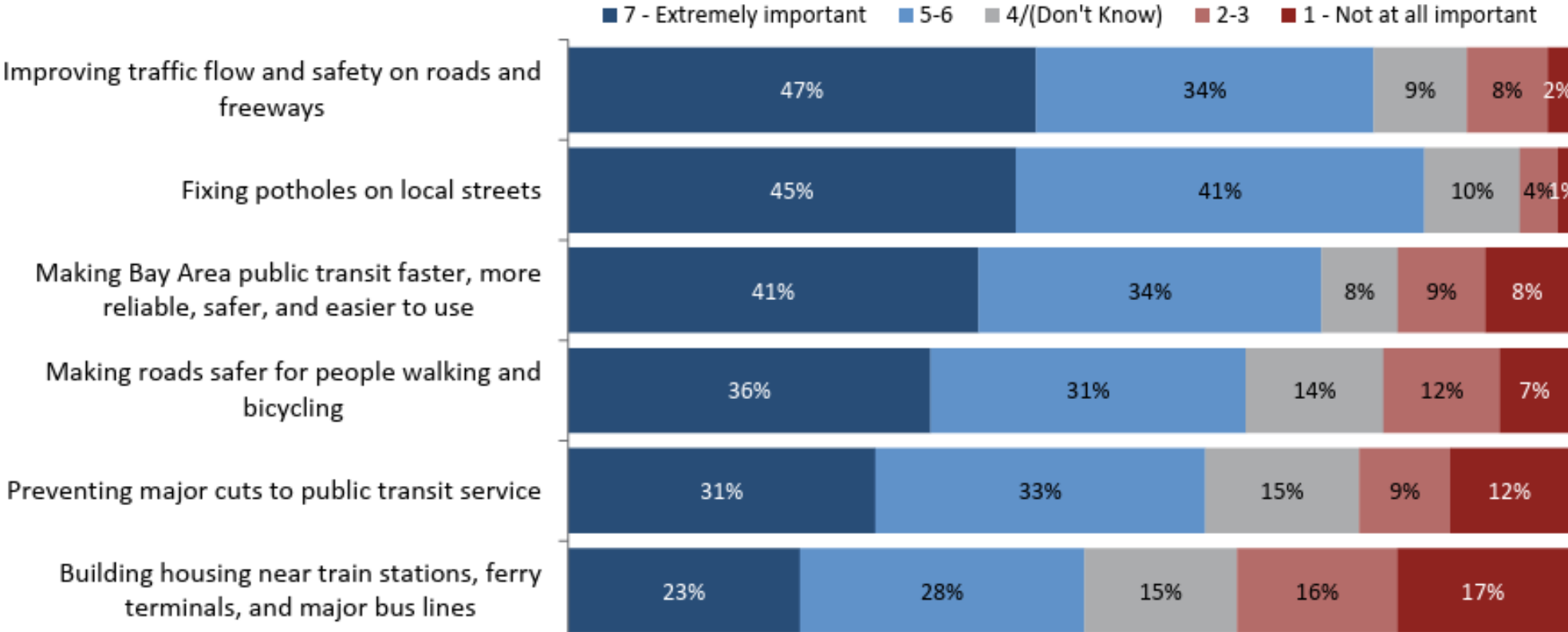
Q8-13. Thinking about the Bay Area's transportation needs, on a scale from one to seven, where one is not at all important and seven is extremely important, please tell me how important each of the following is to you.

25-9571 MTC Transportation Regional Measure Survey 2025 | 9



SMC - Issue Importance

San Mateo County



MoE of ±4.0

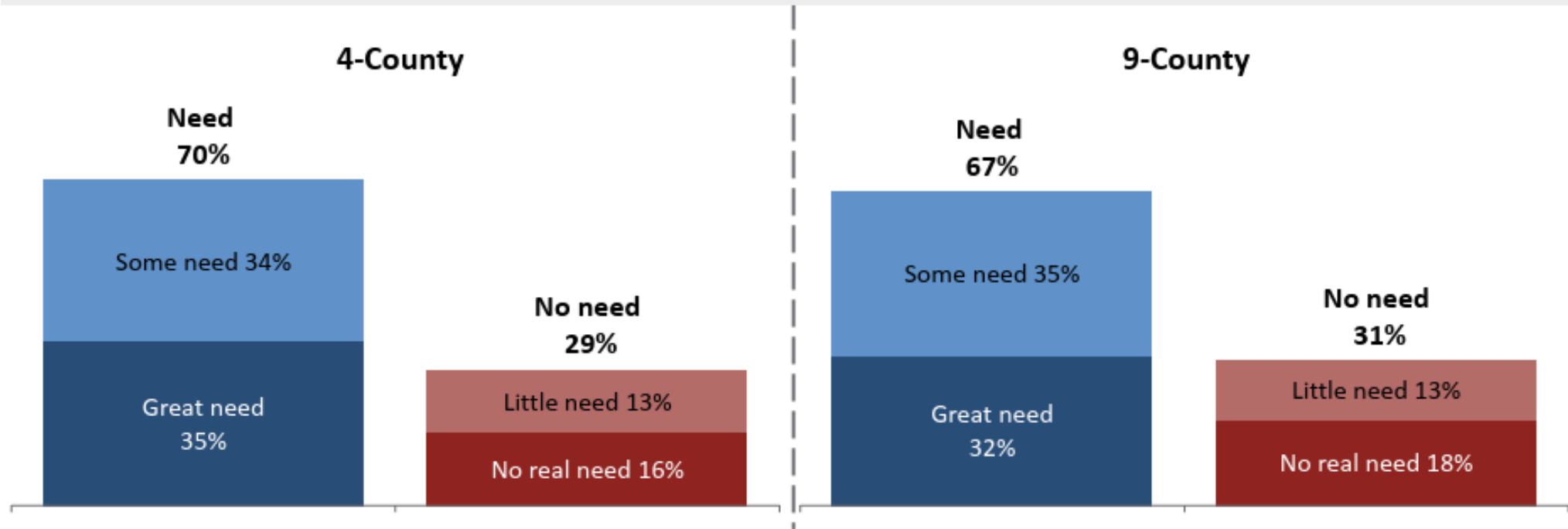
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Need for Transit Funding

Would you say that public transit in the Bay Area has a great need for more money, some need for more money, little need for more money, or no real need for more money?



MoE ranges from ± 2.4 to ± 2.7 Q7.

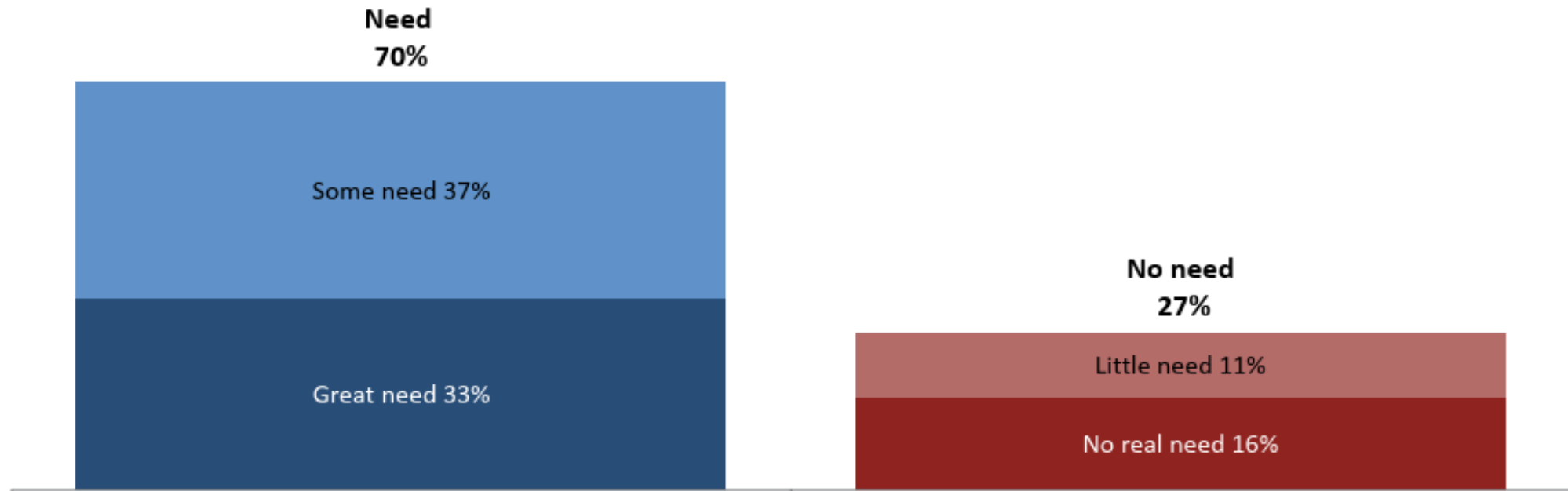
25-9571 MTC Transportation Regional Measure Survey 2025 | 12



SMC - Need for Transit Funding

San Mateo County

Would you say that public transit in the Bay Area has a great need for more money, some need for more money, little need for more money, or no real need for more money?



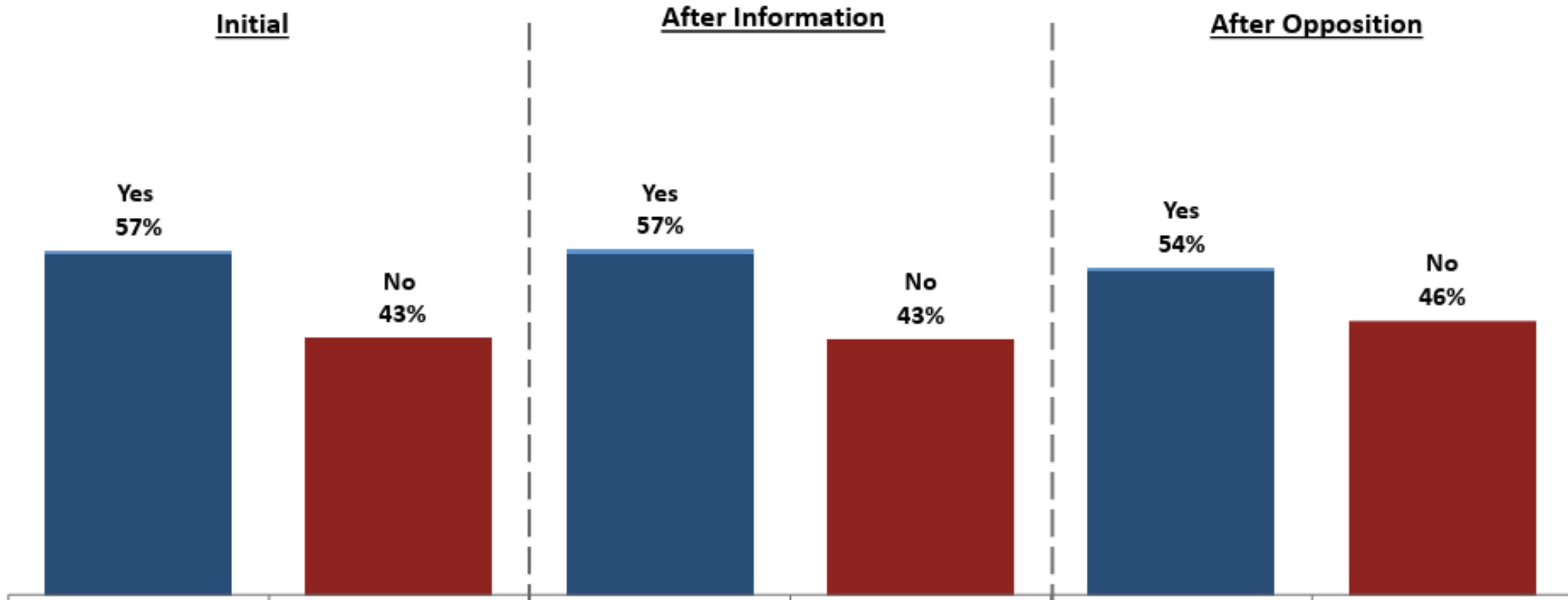
Support by County

Table shows percent "Yes"	1A: ½ Cent Sales Tax 57% Yes 4-County	Hybrid: ½ Cent Sales + Parcel Taxes 51% Yes 9-County	Variable: 1/2 - 7/8 Cent Sales Tax 56% Yes 4-County
Alameda <i>MoE ±6.2 p.p. for each model</i>	61%	55%	59%
Contra Costa <i>MoE ±6.9 p.p. for each model</i>	53%	51%	54%
San Francisco <i>MoE ±6.9 p.p. for each model</i>	55%	54%	58%
San Mateo <i>MoE ±6.9 p.p. for each model</i>	59%	53%	52%
Santa Clara <i>MoE ±5.7 p.p.</i>		50%	
North Bay (Napa, Marin, Solano, Sonoma) <i>MoE ±6.9 p.p.</i>		44%	



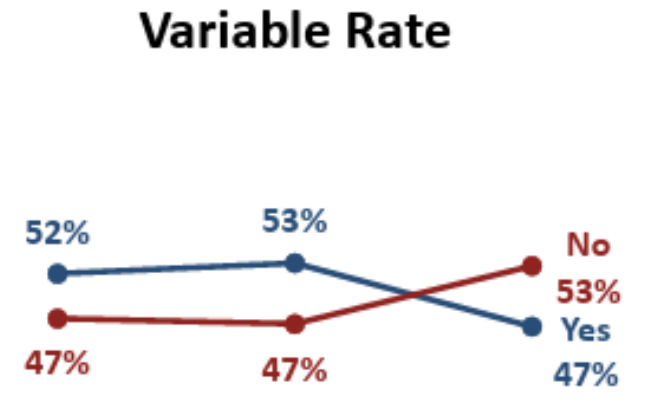
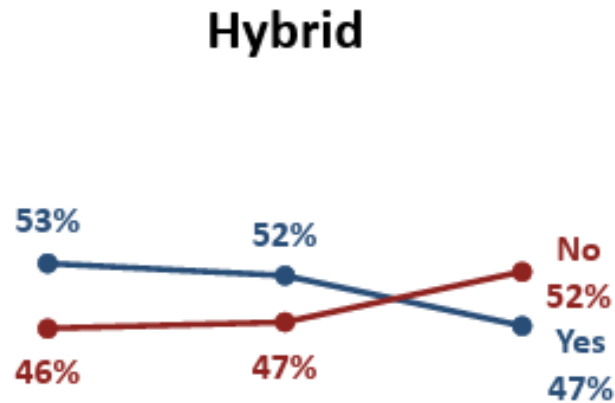
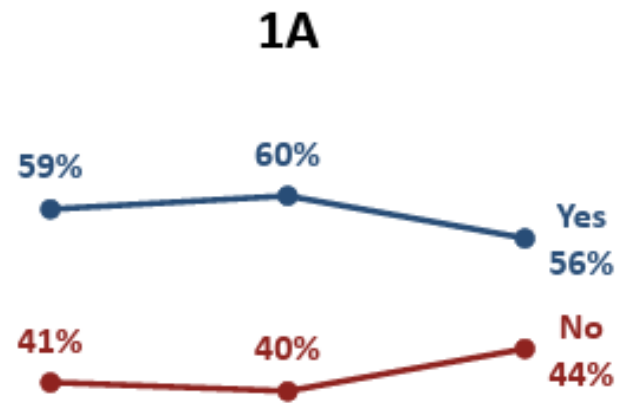
4 County Support After Messaging – ½ Cent

Support for the ½-cent sales tax is fairly steady, with a slight drop in support following opposition messaging.



SMC Positive/Negative Messaging Impacts

San Mateo County



Initial Vote

After Info

After Opp.

Initial Vote

After Info

After Opp.

Initial Vote

After Info

After Opp.



Recommended Next Steps

- Key Takeaways:
 - Citizen's initiative has best chance of success for regional measure
 - Risks in relying on a multi-county citizen's initiative
 - Do not yet know SMC community priorities (polling/expenditure plan development process)
- Recommendations:
 - SMC focus on self-help reauthorization of Measure A in 2028
 - On a parallel path, provide San Mateo County the ability to opt-in to the regional measure
 - Letter to legislative delegation and MTC stating SMC's next steps
 - TA explore polling/focus groups for increased transit operations and existing Measure A categories





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Thank You!

Please email epsteinj@samtrans.com
with any questions.

