SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Nestled against the beautiful Ortega Mountains, the City of Lake Elsinore was founded in 1883, incorporated as a general law city in 1888, and is currently home to an estimated 63,453 residents.[1] With a historic downtown area, multiple parks and recreation amenities, and southern California's largest natural freshwater lake, the City's vision is to be the ultimate destination where residents and visitors can live, work, play, build futures, and fulfill dreams.

Over the past decade, the City of Lake Elsinore's revenues have not kept pace with the growing costs associated with providing municipal services and facilities. Although the City has been proactive in responding to this challenge by reducing costs where feasible and through effective financial management practices, the practical reality is that existing revenues simply do not support the high quality services and facilities that residents have come to expect. Unfortunately, the economic fallout of the coronavirus in recent months has served to deepen this disparity, with the City's budget deficit forecast to reach more than $3 million next year and widening thereafter. To provide the funding required to provide essential city services including reducing gangs, drugs and crime, providing fire protection, paramedic, and 911 emergency response, fixing streets and potholes, addressing homelessness, keeping public areas safe, healthy, clean and graffiti-free, and supporting local businesses during this period of recovery, the City of Lake Elsinore will need to establish a local sales tax measure.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY   In July of this year, the City of Lake Elsinore commissioned True North Research to conduct a statistically reliable survey of voters who are likely to cast a ballot in the November 2020 election to measure the community's opinions and priorities as they pertain to city services, and determine if the community is interested in supporting a revenue measure to provide additional funding for these services. Respondents were selected for the study using a stratified and clustered random sampling method, which ensured that the profile of the sample matched the profile of the likely November 2020 electorate on key variables that are related to voting behavior (i.e, age, gender, partisanship, and household party type). The survey was administered using a mixed-mode design which employed multiple recruiting methods (telephone and email) and multiple ways to participate in the survey (telephone and online), and was also conducted in English or Spanish according to a respondent's preference. During the data collection period (July 3-11, 2020), a total of 700 voters participated in the survey, resulting in a maximum statistical margin of error due to sampling of ± 3.7% at the 95% level of confidence.

FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS   The survey results indicate that Lake Elsinore voters are generally pleased with the quality of life in Lake Elsinore, have a high opinion of the City's performance in providing municipal services, and are willing to support a revenue measure to provide adequate funding for public safety, public works, and other essential city services.

Quality of Life   As shown in Figure 1 on the next page, more than half of respondents rated the **quality of life** in Lake Elsinore as excellent (8%) or good (49%), and 35% rated it as fair. Less than 10% of respondents used poor or very poor to describe the quality of life in the city.

1. Source: California Department of Finance Population Estimate, January 2020.

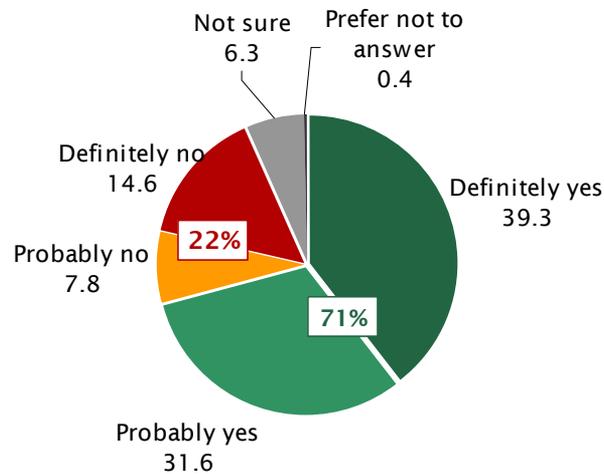**FIGURE 1 RATING OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN LAKE ELSINORE**
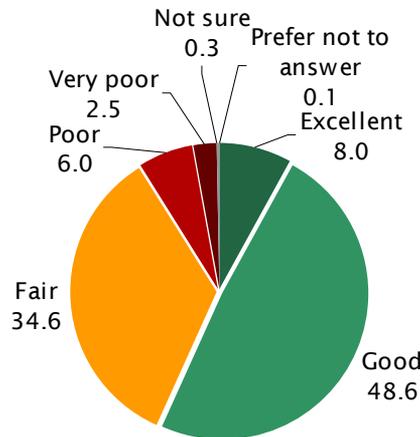
City's Performance in Providing Services The results were similarly positive when respondents were asked whether they were generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the City of Lake Elsinore's **performance in providing municipal services** (see Figure 2). Overall, 69% stated that they were either very satisfied (14%) or somewhat satisfied (55%) with the City's performance in providing municipal services. Approximately 27% of respondents indicated they were dissatisfied with the City's performance in this respect, and an additional 5% were unsure or unwilling to answer the question. It is worth noting that the level of satisfaction recorded in this 2020 survey is 4% higher than that recorded in a 2016 survey conducted for the City of Lake Elsinore.

FIGURE 2 OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH CITY'S PERFORMANCE IN PROVIDING MUNICIPAL SERVICES
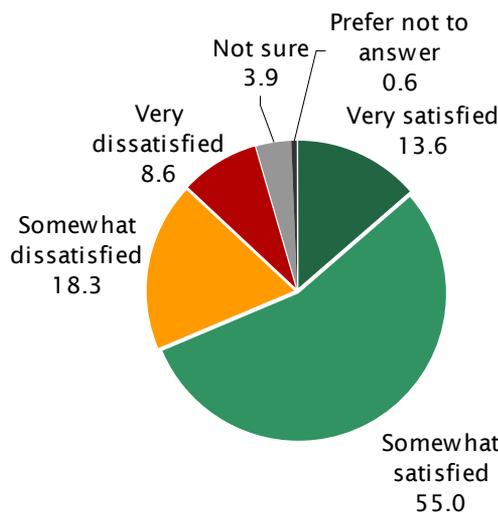
Support for Local Revenue Measure When asked if they would be willing to support a one cent sales tax increase to provide funding for general city services including reducing gangs, drugs and crime, providing fire protection, paramedic, and 911 emergency response, fixing streets and potholes, addressing homelessness, keeping public areas safe, healthy and clean, and supporting local businesses, approximately seven-in-ten voters (71%) indicated they would support the measure, well above the simple majority (50% +1) required for passage (see Figure 3 on the next page).

FIGURE 3 SUPPORT FOR LOCAL SALES TAX MEASURE

Not sure
6.3

Prefer not to
answer
0.4

Definitely no
14.6

22%

Probably no
7.8

71%

Definitely yes
39.3

Probably yes
31.6

Service Priorities   Although Lake Elsinore voters were supportive of funding *all* of the services tested in the survey (see Figure 4), they were most supportive of using proceeds from the proposed measure to fix streets and repair potholes (92% strongly or somewhat favor), provide fire protection and prevention services (91%), keep public areas clean, healthy, and free of graffiti (90%), provide quick response times to 911 emergencies (90%), and reduce gang activity and drug-related crimes (90%).

FIGURE 4 PROJECTS & SERVICES

	Strongly favor	Somewhat favor
Fix streets and repair potholes	57.2	34.7
Provide fire protection and paramedic services	60.8	29.9
Keep public areas clean, healthy, free of graffiti	58.0	32.4
Provide quick responses to 911 emergencies	68.4	21.7
Reduce gang activity and drug-related crimes	65.0	24.5
Prepare for public health emergencies, wildfires, natural disasters, other large-scale emergencies	57.2	30.8
Ensure adequate 911 emergency capacity	57.0	30.1
Address the homeless problem	60.4	25.9
Provide law enforcement services including neighborhood patrols, crime prevention, investigations	58.1	25.5
Improve economic development, attract new employers, businesses to Lake Elsinore	50.4	33.1
Provide assistance programs for residents, local businesses during this period of recovery	43.0	35.5

% Respondents