

# PARCEL TAX FEASIBILITY SURVEY

CONDUCTED FOR THE  
LA CAÑADA UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESENTED BY  
TIMOTHY McLARNEY PH.D.

8/21/2019





# PURPOSE OF STUDY

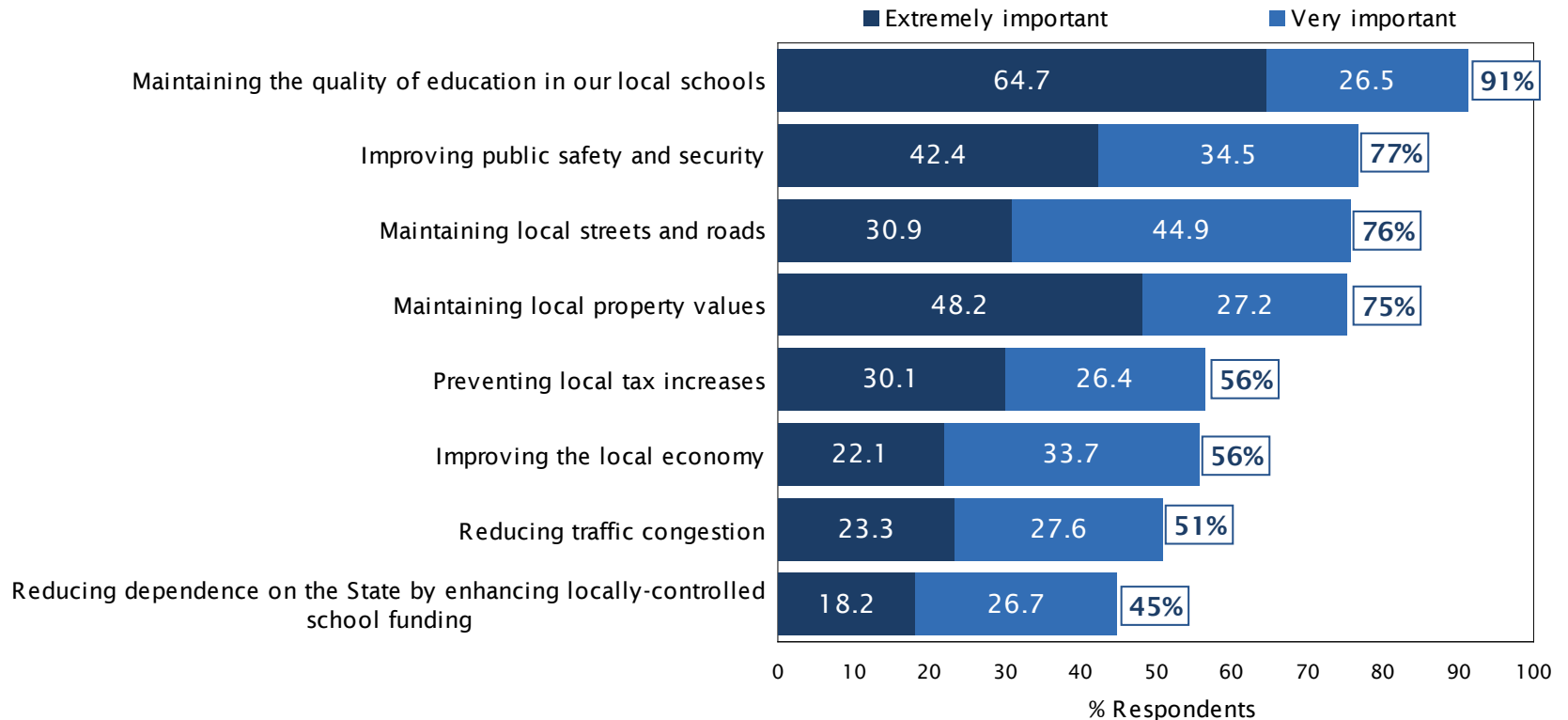
- Identify whether a parcel tax renewal to continue funding for local schools is feasible
- Identify how to create a measure consistent with community priorities
- Gather information needed for communications & outreach



# METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

- Conducted July 18<sup>th</sup> to July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- Random Sample: 482 District voters likely to participate in November 2020 election, with March 2020 subset
- Mixed-Method approach
  - Recruited via phone and email
  - Data collection via phone and online
  - 16-minute average interview length
- Overall margin of error is  $\pm 4.4\%$

# IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES





# INITIAL BALLOT TEST

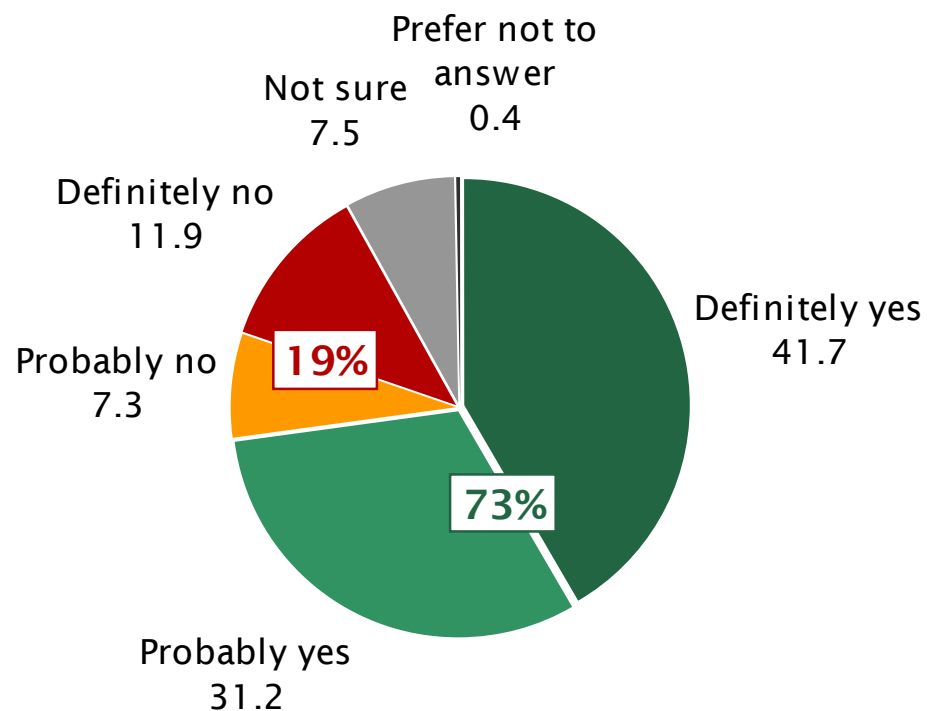
In order to:

- Protect the quality of education in our local schools
- Attract and retain highly qualified teachers
- Maintain manageable class sizes
- And continue funding advanced academic programs in math, science, technology, engineering, arts, and robotics

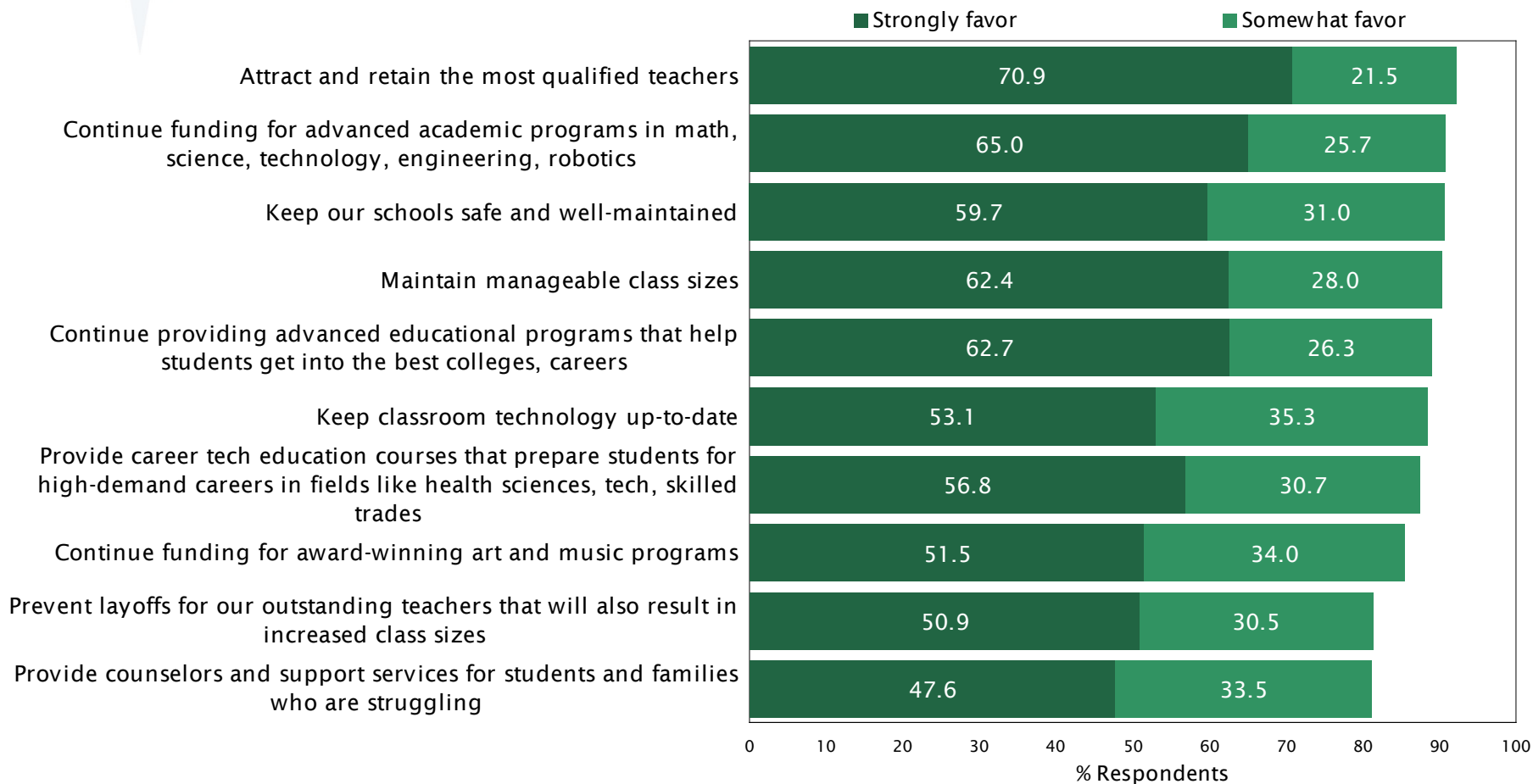
Shall the La Canada Unified School District measure to renew the expiring school parcel tax at the current rate of \$450 per parcel be adopted, continuing \$2.5 million in annual school funding until ended by voters, with annual inflation adjustments, senior exemptions, and all money staying local? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?



# INITIAL BALLOT TEST



# PROGRAMS & SERVICES



# POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

Schools among best in the State; scores consistently in top 5%, 98% of graduates go on to college; measure essential to maintaining quality of outstanding schools

Even with no children, measure a wise investment; good schools improve quality of life, protect home values; homes in District sell for 20% more than those outside

If we want kids to be prepared to succeed in global economy, they need high quality education, including advanced courses in math, science, tech, arts

All money raised by measure will stay in District to support school instruction; it can't be taken away by State or used for administrator salaries

State provides far less money per student than nearly every other state in country, District schools receive some of lowest levels of funding among schools in state

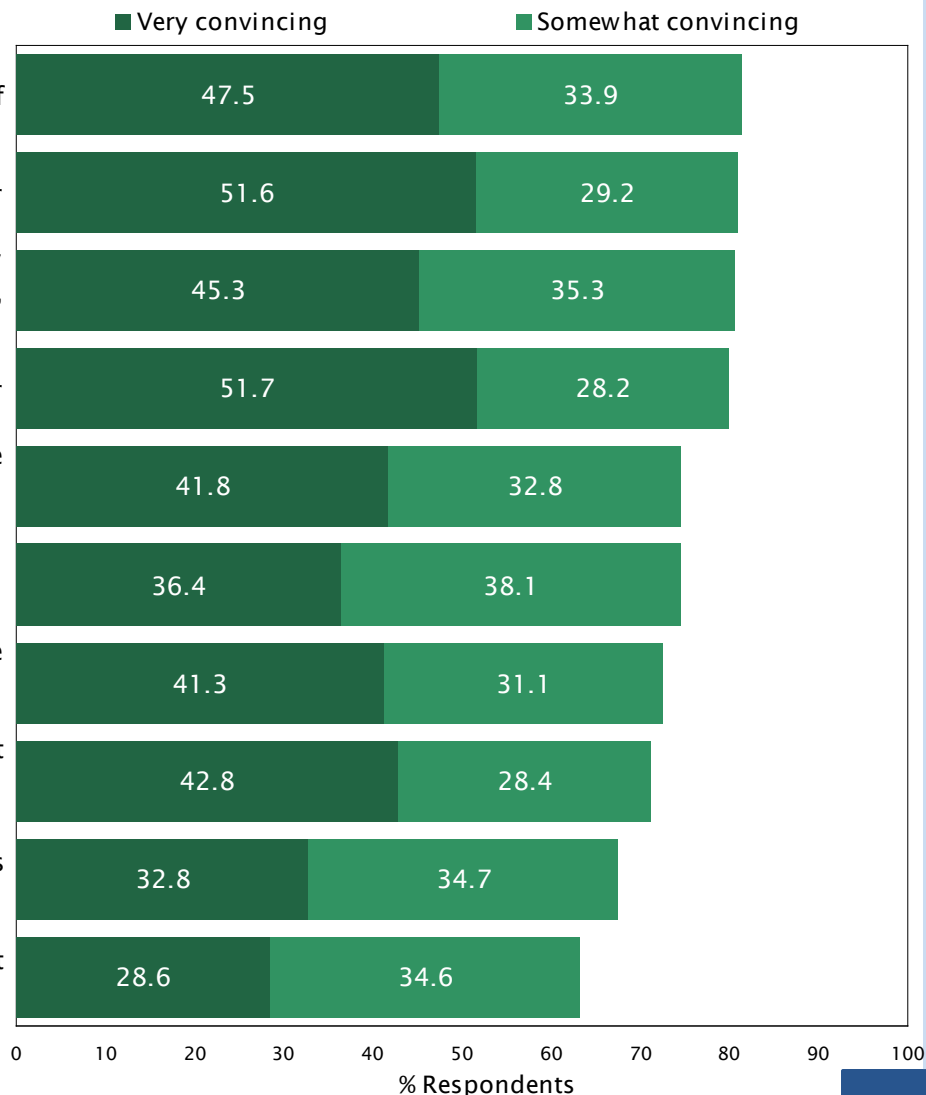
Can't rely on State to provide adequate, stable funding to schools; measure provides stable source of locally-controlled funding Sacramento can't take away

Measure will provide optional exemption for property owners 65+; we do not want measure to become a burden to those living on a fixed income

There is a lot at stake; if parcel tax expires, schools would have to cut teachers, librarians, counselors, support staff, eliminate programs, increase class sizes

There will be a clear system of accountability including a Citizen's Oversight Committee to ensure money is spent properly

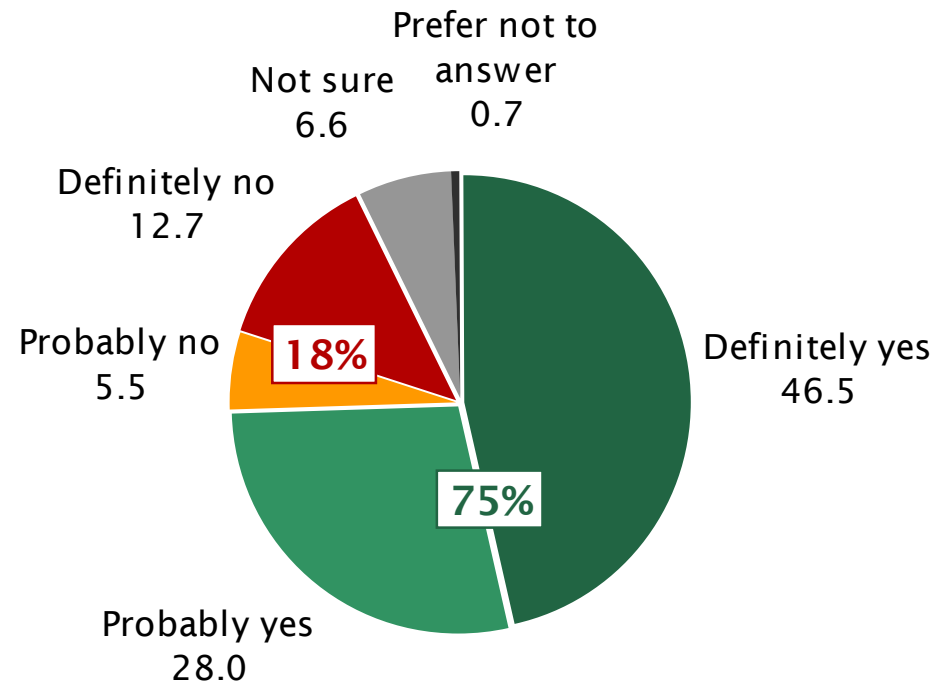
Measure will NOT raise base tax rate your household already pays; it just allows rate to keep up with inflation over time



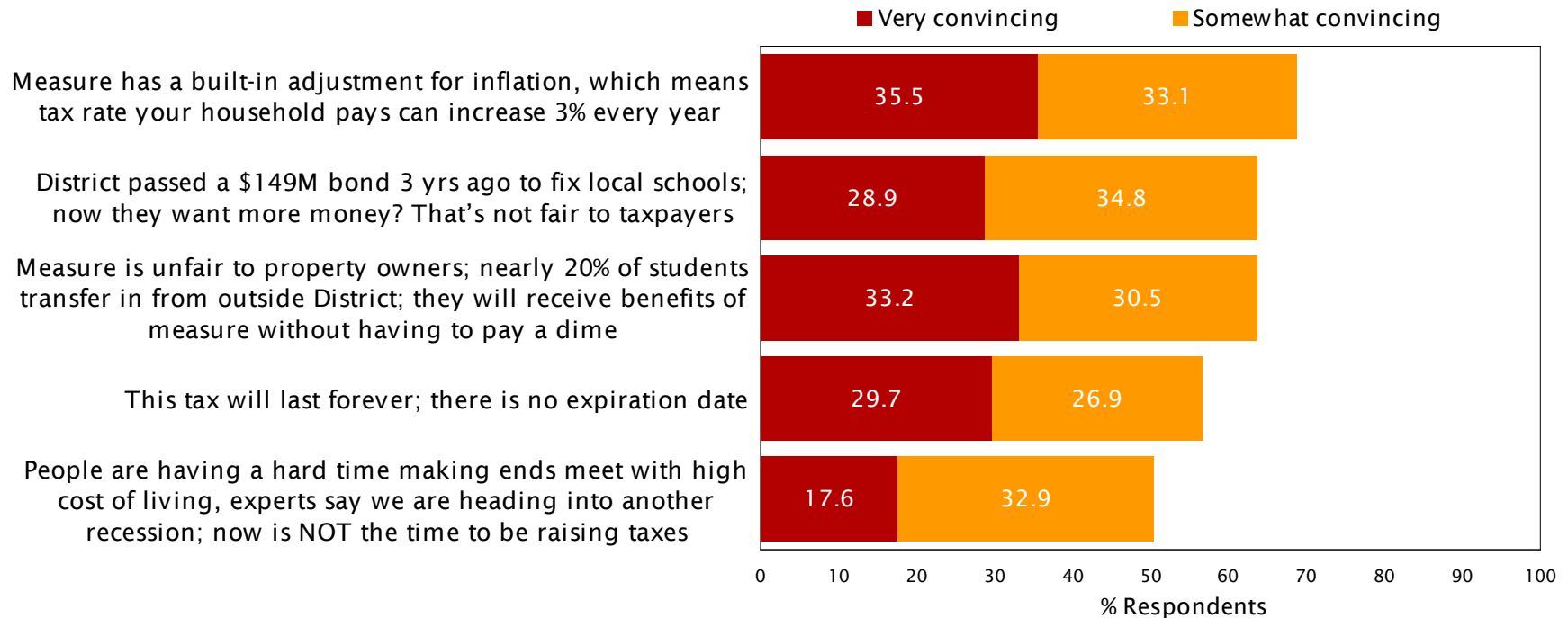




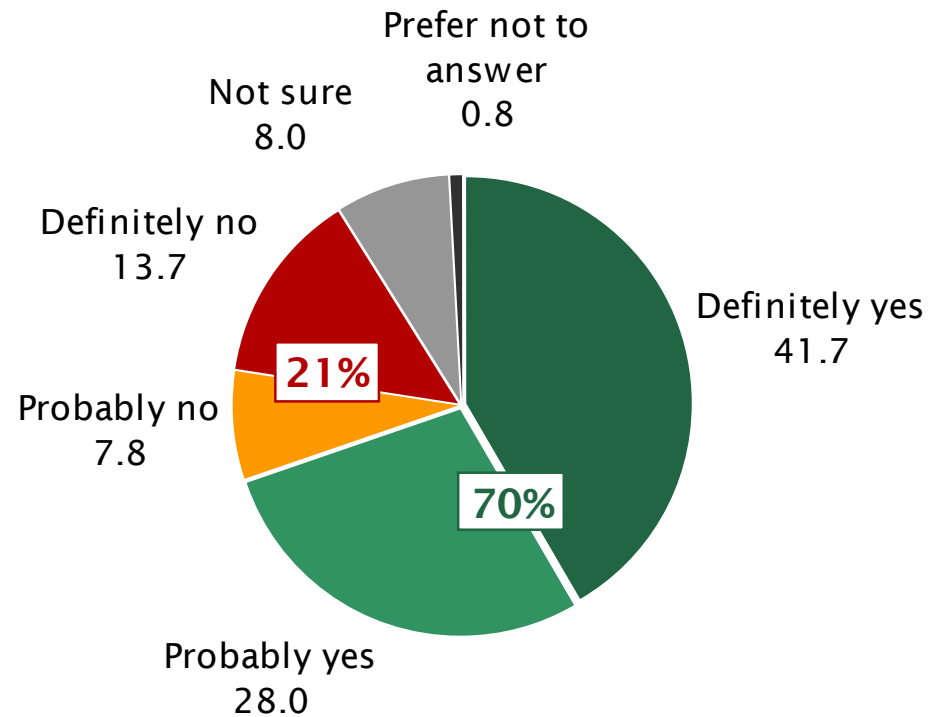
# INTERIM BALLOT TEST



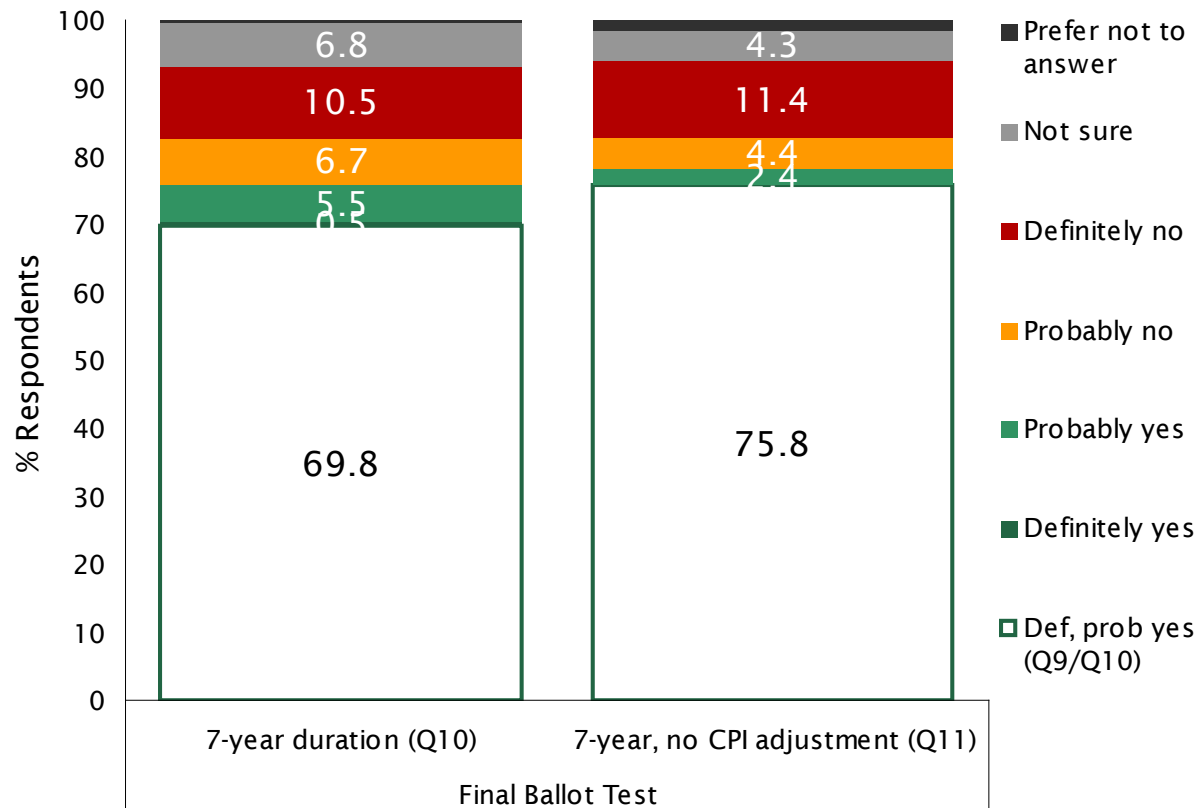
# NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS



# FINAL BALLOT TEST



# FINAL BALLOT TEST WITH 7-YEAR DURATION & 7-YEAR DURATION + NO CPI ADJUSTMENT





# KEY CONCLUSIONS

- Is it feasible to move forward with a parcel tax renewal in 2020? **Yes.**

## ***Positive Signs from Survey***

- Voters perceive that maintaining the quality of education in local public schools is the most important issue facing the community
- Strong natural support for the proposed measure (73%)
- Strong interest in the programs to be funded
- Positive arguments resonate, increasing support to 75%
- Support exceeds two-thirds, even after opposition arguments



# OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Snapshot in time, not a crystal ball
- **Duration:** Until ended by voters
- **Price Tag:** Extend at current rate (no increase) with CPI
- **Priorities:** Attract/retain high quality teachers, advanced STEM and robotics, safe/well-maintained schools, manageable class sizes, prepare students for top-ranked colleges and careers.
- **Election Date:** Proceed with March 2020 as target.
- **District Communications:** Expand the conversation with the community to build awareness and consensus on your proposal.

# La Cañada USD March 2020 Parcel Tax Timeline

