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FM3

*Public Opinion Research
& Strategy*

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: John Fairbank & Adam Sonenshein
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RE: Summary of Survey Results

DATE: August 28, 2015

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a survey¹ of Hemet residents to provide the City with feedback on its residents' budgeting priorities and assess interest in possible local community revenue options.

Key Findings:

- 1) Hemet residents strongly approve of the performance of their public safety agencies.
- 2) Survey respondents overwhelmingly believe that the City of Hemet is in need of additional funds to provide the level of services that residents need and want.
- 3) More than three-quarters of respondents were interested in establishing voter-approved, special sales tax funding for public safety to maintaining and improving local public safety services, including police and fire protection, paramedic services and 911 emergency response. This puts the measure well above the two-thirds threshold for passage and outside of the survey's margin of error.
- 4) After hearing information that could be presented about the measure, support is maintained at a level above the threshold for passing the measure.
- 5) A ballot measure that would fund the same public safety services by establishing a utility users' tax is not supported at a rate higher than the two-thirds threshold needed for passage.

¹ From August 6th – 15th, 2015, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) conducted a telephone survey of 350 Hemet residents likely to vote in the June 2016 California statewide general election. The margin of error for questions asked of the full sample is plus or minus 5.2 percent. The margin of error for questions asked of half of respondents is plus or minus 7.4%.

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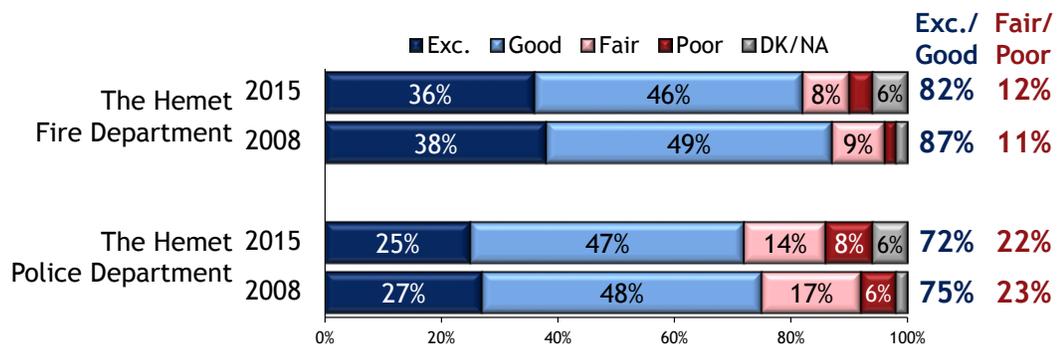
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- 6) More than six-in-ten respondents were interested in establishing a local, voter-approved general sales tax for public safety, street and pothole repair, library services, and programs that attract and retain local businesses and jobs, as well as other general services, well above the majority vote threshold needed for passage and outside of the survey’s margin of error.
- 7) Police and fire department leaders should work with residents, business owners and other stakeholders to further refine the measure before making the decision regarding revenue enhancement.

Detailed Findings:

The City of Hemet’s Fire and Police departments both received very strong ratings by survey respondents for their job performance. As seen in **Figure 1** below, a combined 82 percent of respondents believe the Hemet Fire Department is either doing an “excellent” or “good” job, and 72 percent believe the same about the Hemet Police Department. These ratings are in line with research conducted in Hemet by FM3 in 2008.

Figure 1: Job Performance Ratings of Hemet Public Safety Agencies



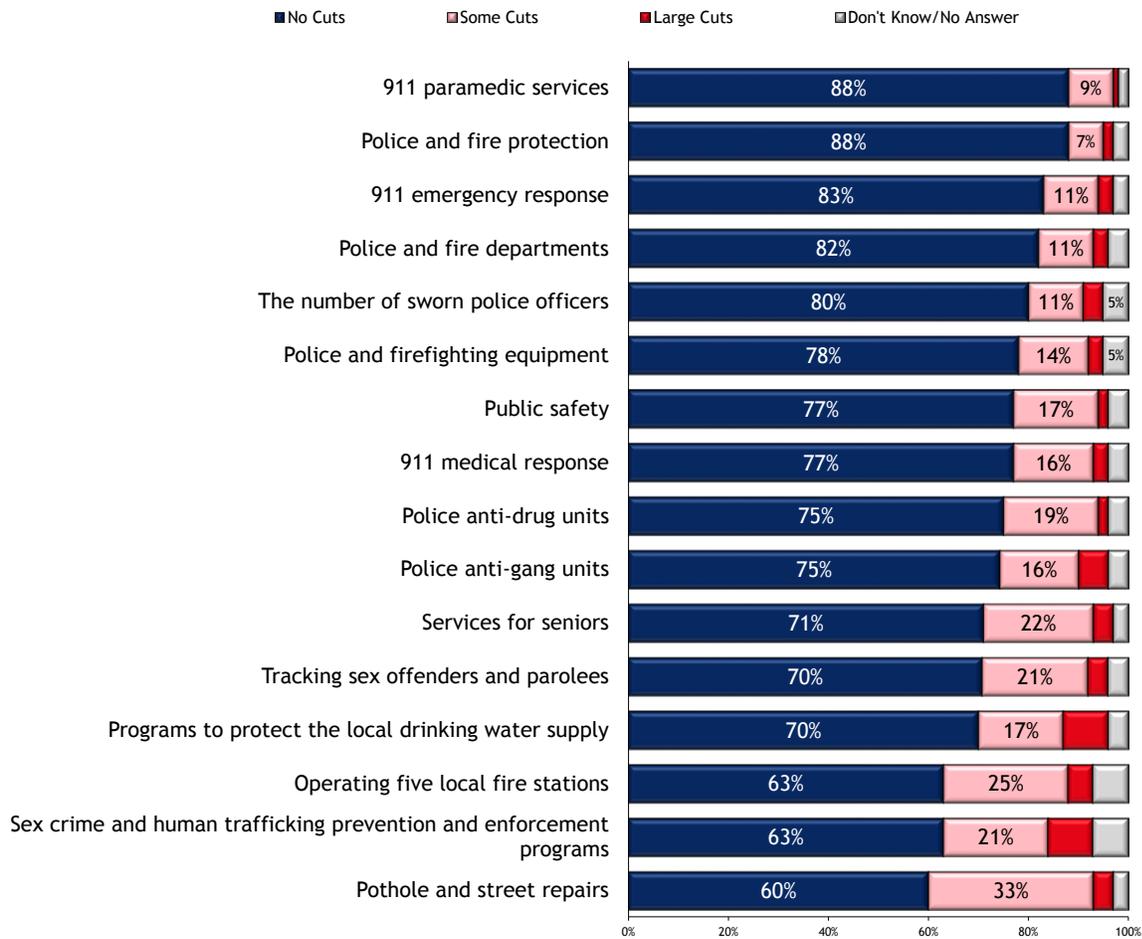
Hemet residents are very concerned about crime in their city, with over 80 percent describing several elements of crime as being either “extremely serious” or “very serious problems” in the city. Residents expressed the greatest concern about “the number of sex offenders and other parolees released into our community early from state prisons,” with 87 percent of respondents calling it either an extremely or very serious problem in Hemet (see **Table 1** on the following page). “Gang members and drug dealers coming into Hemet from L.A. communities to commit crimes” and “crime in general” were both described as extremely/very serious problems by over 80 percent of respondents.

Table 1: Ratings of the Seriousness of Problems in Hemet

	Extremely Serious	Very Serious	Not too Much of a Problem	Not a Problem	Don't Know / No Answer	Total Extr. / Very Serious
The number of sex offenders and other parolees released into our community early from state prisons	45%	42%	4%	3%	6%	87%
Gang members and drug dealers coming into Hemet from L.A. communities to commit crimes	40%	43%	6%	4%	7%	83%
Crime in general	34%	47%	12%	4%	3%	81%
Vandalism	26%	46%	18%	7%	4%	72%
Personal safety in Hemet	24%	43%	19%	11%	3%	67%
State budget cuts to city programs and services	24%	42%	13%	6%	15%	66%
Feeling safe in the City	28%	35%	17%	17%	3%	63%
Feeling safe at night in the City	25%	39%	20%	13%	4%	63%
The potential for the City to declare bankruptcy	21%	42%	9%	11%	17%	63%
Continuing the City's current policy of operating a local police department	25%	35%	11%	20%	9%	60%
Continuing the City's current policy of operating a local fire department	25%	34%	13%	20%	8%	59%
Waste and inefficiency in local government	21%	37%	20%	8%	14%	58%
The size of City retirement benefits and pensions	17%	31%	15%	6%	30%	48%
The amount of local taxes people have to pay for city services	13%	25%	31%	18%	14%	38%

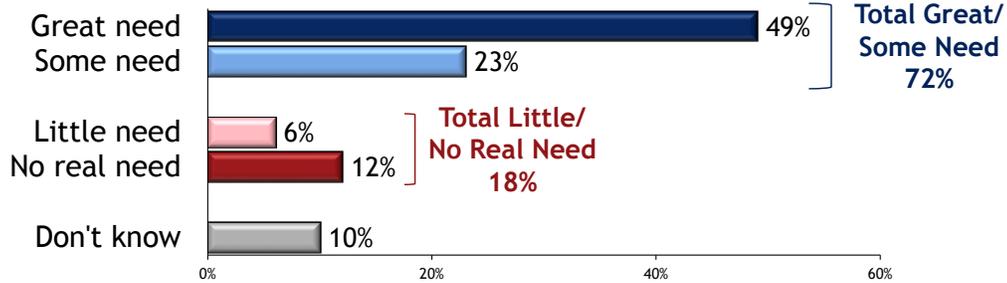
Hemet residents strongly opposed cuts to the City’s budget for public safety services, including more than 80 percent saying they wanted “no cuts” to police and fire protection, paramedic and 911 emergency response services. As can be seen in **Figure 2**, 88 percent of respondents oppose any cuts to “911 paramedic services” and “police and fire protection” in Hemet. Additionally, over 80 percent oppose cuts to “911 emergency response,” “police and fire departments,” and “the number of sworn police officers.”

Figure 2: Willingness to Accept Budget Cuts for Hemet City Services



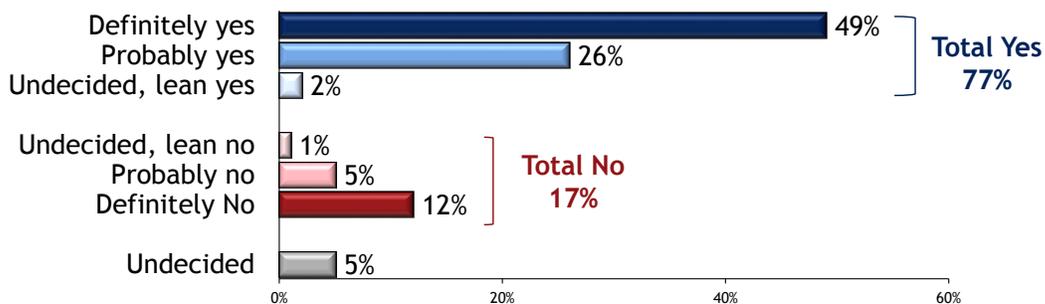
Over 70 percent of respondents indicated that Hemet is in need of additional revenue to provide the level of city services that residents need and want (Figure 3). Of those respondents, nearly half believe the City’s need for funding is “great.” Less than 20 percent believe that Hemet has little or no real need for funding, while 10 percent are unsure.

Figure 3: Percentage Saying Hemet Needs Additional Revenue



Supporters outnumber opponents by more than four-to-one for a June 2016 local, voter-approved special purpose one-cent sales tax measure. After hearing a description, 77 percent of respondents said they would support a possible revenue measure called the Hemet Police and Fire Community Safety Measure (see Figure 4) to maintain and improve local public safety services, 11 percentage points above the two-thirds threshold for passage and outside the survey’s margin of error. The hypothetical measure would provide funding for police, fire, paramedics, and 911 emergency response, including efforts to reduce the impact of gangs and drugs and reduce homelessness, vandalism and graffiti. The hypothetical measure also included several provisions to ensure fiscal accountability. Only 18 percent of respondents oppose the measure and five percent are undecided.

Figure 4: Support for Public Safety Revenue Measure for the June 2016 Ballot

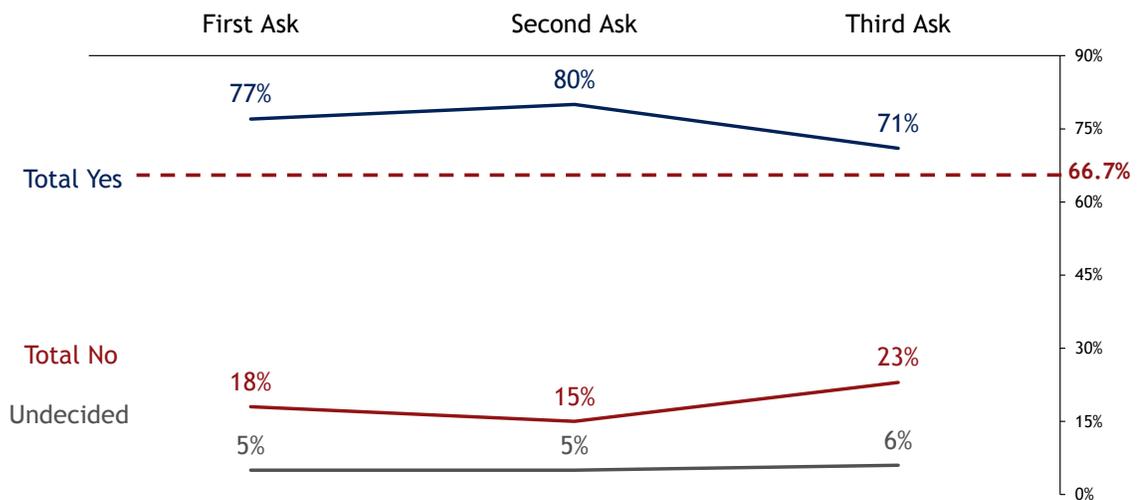


An alternative 6.8% Utility Users’ Tax measure for the same services as described above was supported by 63 percent of survey respondents, below the two-thirds threshold for passage. The survey also tested an additional hypothetical one-cent sales tax measure which would fund public safety and other general services including street and pothole repair, library services, and programs to attract and retain local businesses and jobs. This measure was supported by 62 percent of voters – well above the majority vote threshold for this type of measure and outside of the survey’s margin of error.

The one-cent public safety sales tax measure would have strong support from members of all political parties. Republicans support the measure overwhelmingly with 75 percent indicating they would vote yes and only 21 percent voting no, with five percent undecided. Support is even higher among Democrats, of whom 83 percent would vote yes and only 11 percent would vote no, with six percent undecided. Seventy-two percent of Independent voters would vote yes on the measure, compared to only 25 percent who would vote no and three percent who are undecided.

After an exchange of information about the measure, 71 percent of respondents support it, well above the two-thirds threshold for passage (see Figure 5). The measure reaches a high water mark of 80 percent of respondents saying they would vote yes to support the measure.

**Figure 5: Support for a Potential One-Cent Public Safety Sales Tax Measure:
Before and After Informational Messages**



More than 70 percent of respondents said that they would be more likely to support the hypothetical revenue measure if any of several fiscal accountability provisions were included (see Figure 6). It was most important to respondents to know that “all funds raised by the measure would be required to be used only in Hemet,” with 81 percent saying the statement made them more likely to support the measure, including 68 percent who said it made them “much more likely.” Additionally, 79 percent would be more likely to support the measure if “it requires annual financial audits” (including 62% much more likely).

Figure 6: Ratings of Possible Accountability Provisions

