City of Berkeley

Findings from a Survey of 508 Likely November 2018 Voters in the City of Berkeley

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Methodology

• Survey conducted from April 19-25, 2018

• Telephone interviews using professional interviewers.

• Geographically stratified random sample of 508 likely November 2018 voters in the City of Berkeley.

• The margin of error for the full sample is +/-4.4%.

• The data were weighted slightly by gender, region, race, age, and party registration to match the sample to the projected turnout of likely voters.
Key Findings

- A measure to increase the transfer tax for residential property sales over one million dollars has 63% in favor – four points short of the two-thirds threshold needed to win. When voters hear additional arguments on the measure, the simulated Yes vote rises to 66%.
  - A residential and commercial version of this measure has 55% approval initially.

- A community safety measure issuing a parcel tax to generate revenue dedicated to enhanced community policing has 51% in favor, well short of the two-thirds threshold needed to win.

- Affordable housing/workforce housing bonds for 200 million dollars and 150 million dollars, when calculated as single-issue bonds, also fall below the two-thirds threshold needed for approval.

- A measure to permit the personnel board to set the salaries of the Mayor and Council every five years has 40% in favor, with 19% opposed and 40% undecided.
Ballot Measures

Measures to raise revenue for homeless services are much closer to the winning threshold needed to win, with a residential property transfer tax version within 3 points of passing. Voters are more divided on a community safety parcel tax, an affordable housing/workforce housing bond, and a council salaries measure.
If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure, or are you undecided?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ballot Measure</th>
<th>Total Yes</th>
<th>Strong Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Services - Residential Property Transfer Tax*</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Services - Residential/Commercial Property Transfer Tax*</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Safety Parcel Tax</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing/Workforce Housing Bond - $200 million, single-issue bond</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing/Workforce Housing Bond - $150 million, single-issue bond</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Asked of half the sample

2/3 Threshold (Revenue measures)

Homeless Services - Residential Property Transfer Tax*
- Total Yes: 41
- Strong Yes: 55

Homeless Services - Residential/Commercial Property Transfer Tax*
- Total Yes: 30
- Strong Yes: 51

Community Safety Parcel Tax
- Total Yes: 22
- Strong Yes: 41

Affordable Housing/Workforce Housing Bond - $200 million, single-issue bond
- Total Yes: 20
- Strong Yes: 41

Affordable Housing/Workforce Housing Bond - $150 million, single-issue bond
- Total Yes: 24
- Strong Yes: 40

Council Salaries
- Total Yes: 40
- Strong Yes: 40

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Community Safety

A slight majority of voters are supportive of a measure to increase funding for community safety, including bike patrols, increased retention and recruitment of police officers, increased mental health services, and providing ambulance support for mental health incidents.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Safety</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shall the City of Berkeley issue a parcel tax in the amount of 6 cents per square foot, or 128 dollars a year for an average 1900 square foot home, to generate 6 million dollars annually for community safety with revenue dedicated to enhanced community policing, including bike patrols, increased retention and recruitment of police officers, increased mental health services including crisis response workers and providing ambulance transport for mental health incidents?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A measure to issue a parcel tax with revenue going toward community safety currently falls short of the margin needed to win.

Q4. [COMMUNITY SAFETY] Shall the City of Berkeley issue a parcel tax in the amount of 6 cents per square foot, or 128 dollars a year for an average 1900 square foot home, to generate 6 million dollars annually for community safety with revenue dedicated to enhanced community policing, including bike patrols, increased retention and recruitment of police officers, increased mental health services including crisis response workers and providing ambulance transport for mental health incidents? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure, or are you undecided?
# Community Safety Engaged Debate Text

## Pro: Critical Shortage Of Police

Supporters of the measure say the City of Berkeley is currently facing a critical shortage of police officers, resulting in the elimination of some police units including the traffic division, bike patrols, the elimination of investigative positions, and reductions in the community services bureau. The City needs additional revenues to raise salaries to be competitive with other departments and to attract and retain officers. Additional funding will enable the Police Department to expand community policing programs, including bike patrols in parks and commercial districts.

## Pro: Not Enough Crisis Services

Supporters of the measure say Berkeley does not have enough crisis services to address the growing mental health crisis on city streets. Currently, the city has four staff on the Mobile Crisis Team who work 11:30 am to 10 pm and a Homeless Outreach and Treatment Team that does referral-based outreach and assessment. Berkeley Police have stated that 35% of their emergency calls relate to a mental health crisis. The lack of additional mental health services limits the ability of Berkeley Police to respond to other police calls and engage in crime prevention.
Con

Opponents of the measure say that too much of the City’s budget already goes to police and that we need to focus more of the City budget on mental health services. In addition, opponents say that Berkeley’s housing costs are out of control and taxpayers already pay some of the highest tax rates in the state. This extra burden makes it even harder and more expensive to live in Berkeley.
Support and opposition to the measure increase after arguments on both sides. Of the two pro arguments tested, the one highlighting that there aren’t enough mental health crisis services is more effective in raising support.

Community Safety: Engaged Debate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simulated Ballot: Critical Shortage Of Police*</th>
<th>Simulated Ballot: Not Enough Crisis Services*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threshold (67%)</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes: 55</td>
<td>Yes: 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No: 31</td>
<td>No: 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided/DK: 14</td>
<td>Undecided/DK: 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Split sampled
Q4/5 & Q4/Q6: Does hearing this information make you more or less likely to support the measure? [IF MORE/LESS: Is that much more/less or somewhat more/less?]
A measure raising the residential property transfer tax to pay for homeless services has enough support to get within a few points of the winning threshold. With more information, the measure reaches 66% approval.
Homeless Services - Residential

Shall the City of Berkeley increase the real property transfer tax for residential property sales over $1 million dollars to pay for homeless services, including shelter, and supportive services? Home sales under 1 million dollars would continue to be taxed at 1 and one-half percent. A 1% increase to the property transfer tax for residential property sales over 1 million dollars would raise $6.4 million dollars a year for homeless services.

Homeless Services – Residential & Commercial

Shall the City of Berkeley increase the real property transfer tax for residential and commercial property sales over $1 million dollars to pay for homeless services, including shelter, and supportive services? Home and commercial sales under 1 million dollars would continue to be taxed at 1 and one-half percent. A 1% increase to the property transfer tax for residential and commercial property sales over 1 million dollars would raise $8.6 million dollars a year for homeless services.
Increasing the real property transfer tax to pay for homeless services has majority support, with the residential-only version of the measure garnering 63% support. The version including commercial property has lower support.

*Split sampled

Q7/Q8: If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure, or are you undecided? [IF YES/NO]: And do you support/oppose this measure strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED]: Well, to which side do you lean?
Supporters of the measure say Berkeley has close to 972 homeless individuals, the majority of whom are unsheltered. Berkeley has also seen a growth in encampments which create impacts on residents and local businesses. There have also been cuts in state and federal funding for homelessness. Berkeley is developing a long-term plan to address homelessness, focusing on shelter and permanent housing, and is committed to working regionally to create housing and services. A rapid increase in funding is needed to reduce the number of unsheltered homeless people.

Opponents of the measure say the City of Berkeley already spends millions of dollars annually on homeless services, but housing affordability and homelessness gets worse every day. Increasing the real property tax is just another ill-conceived measure that throws more money at our housing and homelessness issues while city officials have yet to finish developing a long-term plan. Increasing the real property transfer tax will just make it harder for people to live [and do business] in Berkeley.
After hearing arguments in favor and against the measure, the residential-only version of the measure reaches the two-thirds threshold needed to win. The residential and commercial version increases its support to 62% Yes, five points shy of the threshold needed to pass.

**Homeless Services: Engaged Debate**

**Simulated Ballot: Harder To Live In Berkeley***

- **66**
- Yes
- **23**
- No
- **11**
- Undecided/DK

**Simulated Ballot: Harder To Live and Do Business In Berkeley***

- **62**
- Yes
- **29**
- No
- **9**
- Undecided/DK

*Split sampled
Q7/Q9 & Q8/Q10: Does hearing this information make you more or less likely to support the measure? [IF MORE/LESS: Is that much more/less or somewhat more/less?]
Affordable Housing

Voters are mixed in their views of an affordable housing and workforce housing bond measure of 200 million dollars or 150 million dollars to finance the development and preservation of affordable housing.
Affordable Housing/Workforce Housing Measure Text

$200 Million
To finance the development and preservation of affordable housing to extremely low, very low, low, and moderate-income households, including homes for seniors, people with disabilities, and working families such as teachers, shall the City of Berkeley issue **200 million dollars** in general obligation bonds, subject to citizen oversight and regular audits? To pay off the bonds, the average home, or a home with an assessed value of $425,000, would pay an average of 187 dollars per year over 40 years.

$150 Million
Now I’m going to ask you about a similar proposal which would cost a lesser amount but provide less housing. To finance the development and preservation of affordable housing to extremely low, very low, low, and moderate-income households, including homes for seniors, people with disabilities, and working families such as teachers, shall the City of Berkeley issue **150 million dollars** in general obligation bonds, subject to citizen oversight and regular audits? To pay off the bonds, the average home, or a home with an assessed value of $425,000, would pay an average of $170 dollars per year over 40 years.
An affordable housing/workforce housing bond measure currently falls more than twenty points short of the margin needed to win. There is very little difference in support between a 200 million or 150 million dollar bond measure. These bonds were calculated as single issue bonds – one lump sum, creating a higher impact on the average homeowner than a multiple issue bond.

**Affordable Housing/Workforce Housing Ballots**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$200 million</th>
<th>$150 million</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Threshold (67%)**

+15 for $200 million

+14 for $150 million

Q11/12: [Now I’m going to ask you about a similar proposal which would cost a lesser amount but provide less housing.] To finance the development and preservation of affordable housing to extremely low, very low, low, and moderate-income households, including homes for seniors, people with disabilities, and working families such as teachers, shall the City of Berkeley issue [200 million/150 million] dollars in general obligation bonds, subject to citizen oversight and regular audits? To pay off the bonds, the average home, or a home with an assessed value of $425,000, would pay an average of $170 dollars per year over 40 years. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure, or are you undecided? [IF YES/NO]: And do you support/oppose this measure strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED]: Well, to which side do you lean?
An affordable housing/workforce housing bond measure currently falls short of the margin needed to win. While there is little difference in support, voters more intensely support and are less opposed to the $100 million dollar version of the measure. These bonds were calculated as a series of four bonds spread over 10 years.

**Affordable Housing/Workforce Housing Measure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$100 million</th>
<th>$50 million</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threshold (67%)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34 (+43)</td>
<td>30 (+41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Now I'm going to ask you about a similar proposal which would cost a lesser amount but provide less housing.] To finance the development and preservation of affordable housing to extremely low, very low, low, and moderate-income households, including homes for seniors, people with disabilities, and working families such as teachers, shall the City of Berkeley issue [100 million dollars/50 million dollars] in general obligation bonds, subject to citizen oversight and regular audits? To pay off the bonds, the average home would pay an average of 72 dollars per year over 36 years. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure, or are you undecided? [IF YES/NO]: And do you support/oppose this measure strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED]: Well, to which side do you lean?
Affordable Housing/Workforce Housing Engaged Debate Text

**Pro**

Supporters of the measure say rents and home prices are rapidly increasing in the City of Berkeley, making housing unaffordable for low and moderate-income households. Berkeley has only 2 million dollars left in its Housing Trust Fund making it increasingly difficult to finance new affordable housing. This bond would enable Berkeley to leverage its funding with the proposed state Housing Bond and other state and federal funding sources, and private capital to generate three times as much money to support building or buying and fixing up about 1,000 affordable homes over the next ten years.

**Con**

Opponents of the measure say that preserving affordable housing for extremely low to moderate income households is a good cause, but this measure sticks homeowners with a huge bill to solve our affordable housing issue, making it more difficult for families who are struggling with Berkeley’s high costs to stay in their homes. City officials should be working to solve our affordable housing issue without burdening families with even higher costs.
Hearing pro and con arguments on the housing bond measures increases support, but not enough to approach the 67% threshold needed to win. Both support and opposition increase.

Simulated Ballot: Affordable/Workforce Housing

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided/DK</td>
<td>18</td>
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Initial Yes Vote 41%
Council Salaries

Shall Section 19 of the Charter of the City of Berkeley be amended to make the Mayor and City Council full-time positions, and permit Personnel Board to set the salaries of the Mayor and Council every five years based on the results of a salary survey of other cities, and allowing any Councilmember to voluntarily forgo any portion of their compensation back to their City Council office budget.
Forty percent of voters support a measure to amend the City’s charter to permit the personnel board to set the salaries of the Mayor and Council every five years. Nineteen percent would vote No on the measure and 40% are undecided.

Q14: Shall Section 19 of the Charter of the City of Berkeley be amended to make the Mayor and City Council full-time positions, and permit Personnel Board to set the salaries of the Mayor and Council every five years based on the results of a salary survey of other cities, and allowing any Councilmember to voluntarily forgo any portion of their compensation back to their City Council office budget. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure, or are you undecided? [IF YES/NO]: And do you support/oppose this measure strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED]: Well, to which side do you lean?