



**Ballot Measure  
Funding Options Research  
Gainesville & Alachua County**

**Gainesville City Commission  
September 17, 2015**

#130508

**THE TRUST *for* PUBLIC LAND**  

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**LAND FOR PEOPLE**



## Focus of Research

THE TRUST *for* PUBLIC LAND  
CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE

- The Trust for Public Land was contacted independently by Alachua County and City of Gainesville staff in January.
- The City of Gainesville is focused on implementation of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Master Plan, primarily its highest priority projects. Public Opinion Research was conducted for a March 2016 measure.
- Alachua County is focused on re-authorizing funding for its Alachua County Forever land conservation program. November 2016 is the most likely ballot date.
- Other organizations have expressed alternative uses for the infrastructure sales tax.
- The One Mill for School Operations will be on the November, 2016 ballot (approved in 2008, 2012).



# Conservation Finance Mission

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CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE

**The Conservation Finance Program seeks approval for new public funding for land conservation and parks through the research, design and passage of ballot measures and legislation. Other needs are often included.**



# TPL Track Record

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**478 ballot measure wins**  
**81% approval rate**  
**\$48 billion voter approved**

# THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND - LANDVOTE

STATE, COUNTY, MUNICIPAL, AND SPECIAL DISTRICT MEASURES 1998 - 2013



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# TPL Process

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Feasibility Research

Public Opinion Survey

Program Recommendations

Ballot Language

Campaign



# Research Includes

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- Finance options
- Fiscal capacity
- Political profile
- Election history
- Election requirements
- Ballot language requirements
- Best practices



# Gainesville/Alachua County Research

Publicly Funded: Research studies for Gainesville and Alachua County assessing financing mechanism (bond, property tax, sales tax), election history, ballot requirements and so on.

City Contract: Focus on March 2016 to fund the highest priorities of the Vision 2020 Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan. Looked primarily at property tax or bond levied in the city only.

County Contract: Focus on November 2016 to fund continuation of Alachua County Forever. Looked at property tax, bond or sales tax, but sales tax was of greatest interest.



# Options, Success Rates

## Local Conservation Finance Measures in Florida, 1990-2014

Mechanism Type	Total Measures	Measures Passed	Percent Passed
Bond	65	59	91%
Property Tax	13	10	77%
Sales Tax	21	12	57%
Other	2	2	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>82%</b>

*Source: The Trust for Public Land, LandVote database*

# Fiscal Impact Analysis

Estimated Revenue and Costs of Property Tax Increase City of Gainesville			
Mill Levy Increase	Estimated Annual Revenue*	Cost/Year/\$100,000 of taxable property value	Cost/Year/Average single family home**
0.05	\$282,707	\$5	\$4
0.1	\$565,414	\$10	\$7
0.25	\$1,413,534	\$25	\$18
0.5	\$2,827,068	\$50	\$36
0.75	\$4,240,603	\$75	\$53
<p><i>*Based on 2014 total taxable value = \$5,654,136,790</i></p> <p><i>**Based on estimated single family home average taxable value for 2014 = \$71,001</i></p> <p><i>Sources: Alachua County Property Appraiser, 2014 County Tax Roll Data</i></p>			

# Fiscal Impact Analysis

## Estimated City of Gainesville Bond Financing Costs

Bond Issue	Annual Debt Service*	Property Tax Mill Increase	Cost/Year/\$100,000 of taxable property value	Cost/Year/Average single family home**
\$10,000,000	\$735,818	0.130	\$13	\$9
\$20,000,000	\$1,471,635	0.260	\$26	\$18
\$30,000,000	\$2,207,453	0.390	\$39	\$28
\$50,000,000	\$3,679,088	0.651	\$65	\$46
\$80,000,000	\$5,886,540	1.041	\$104	\$74

\*Assumes 20-year bond at 4.0% interest rate; 2014 Total Assessed Valuation = \$5,654,136,790

\*\*Based on estimated single family home average taxable value for 2014 = \$71,001

Sources: Alachua County Property Appraiser, 2014 County Tax Roll Data; Alachua County Property Tax Overview (2014). Florida Department of Revenue

# Fiscal Impact Analysis

## Estimated Revenue and Cost of Infrastructure Sales Tax

Sales Tax	Estimated Annual Revenue*	Household Spending on Taxable Goods	Annual Cost/Household
1.0%	\$29,895,995	\$11,739	\$118
0.5%	\$14,947,997	\$11,739	\$59
Sales Tax	Estimated Annual Revenue*	Total Revenue Attributed to Resident Spending***	% Revenue Generated by Residents****
1.0%	\$29,895,995	\$11,274,490	37.7%
0.5%	\$14,947,997	\$5,637,245	37.7%

\*Estimates from the Florida Department of Revenue, Office of Tax Research

\*\*Estimate assumes 25% of median household income spent on taxable items. This uses \$46,956 (statewide average), rather than \$42,149 reported by the Census, including students households

\*\*\*Average household spending multiplied by number of households in county (96,043)

\*\*\*\*Remainder is attributed to visitors and business expenditures.

Source: Census QuickFacts <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12/12001.html>



**Discretionary Sales Surtax Formula and Revenues, 2015 Default and 2008 Negotiated**

Local Government	1% Tax Rate – If 2015 Default Formula Were Used		1% Tax Rate – If 2008 <del>Interlocal Agreement</del> Percentages Were Used	
	Distribution Percentage	Estimated Distribution	Distribution Percentage	Estimated Distribution
<b>ALACHUA BOCC</b>	<b>57.17%</b>	<b>\$17,092,194</b>	52.21%	\$15,609,894
Alachua	2.69%	\$805,118	2.75%	\$823,451
Archer	0.33%	\$97,220	0.39%	\$117,279
Gainesville	35.78%	\$10,697,595	40.26%	\$12,035,420
Hawthorne	0.40%	\$120,248	0.49%	\$146,540
High Springs	1.58%	\$470,951	1.66%	\$495,725
La Crosse	0.10%	\$31,166	0.07%	\$20,467
Micanopy	0.17%	\$51,943	0.22%	\$66,635
Newberry	1.49%	\$445,672	1.67%	\$500,745
Waldo	0.28%	\$83,888	0.27%	\$79,842
Countywide Total	100.00%	\$29,895,995	100.00%	\$29,895,995

# CITY OF GAINESVILLE, FL



***Data from a survey of 300 likely primary election voters  
in Gainesville, Florida conducted July 15-19, 2015.***

Lori Weigel



**PUBLIC OPINION  
STRATEGIES**

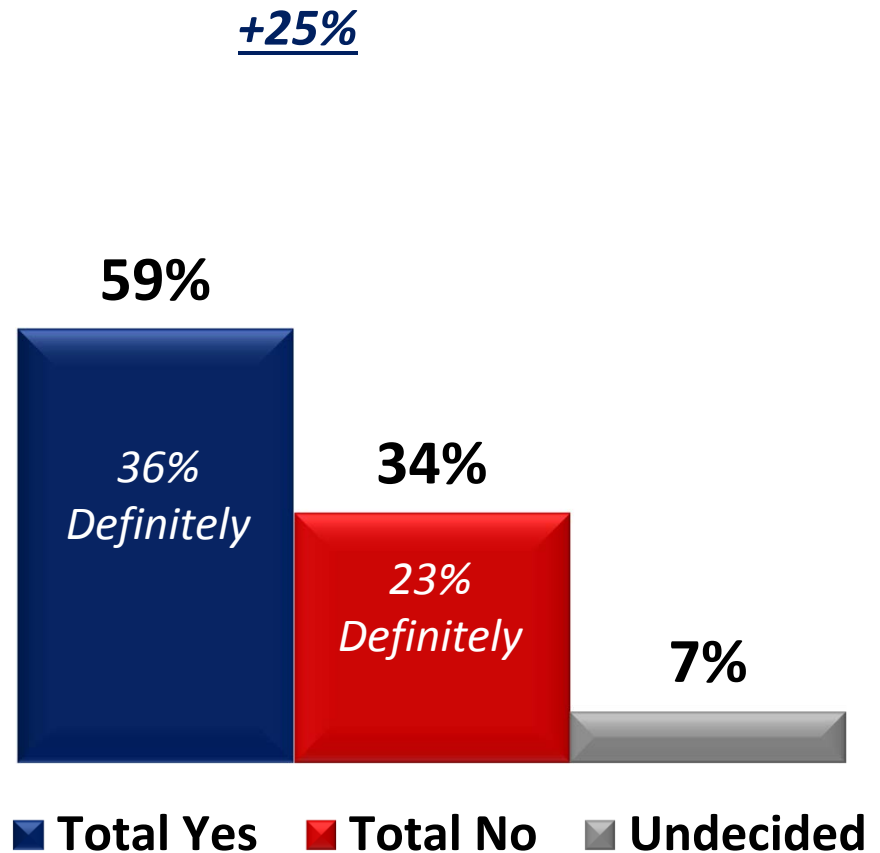
# METHODOLOGY

- **Public Opinion Strategies is pleased to present the key findings of a telephone survey conducted in the City of Gainesville, Florida.**
- **The survey was conducted July 15-19, 2015 among 300 likely primary election voters and has a margin of error of  $\pm 5.66\%$ .**
- **Lori Weigel was the principal researcher on this project. Tom Arnold was the project director and Brian Fraser provided analytical support.**



# We tested a close approximation of the potential ballot language. Three-in-five voters indicate support.

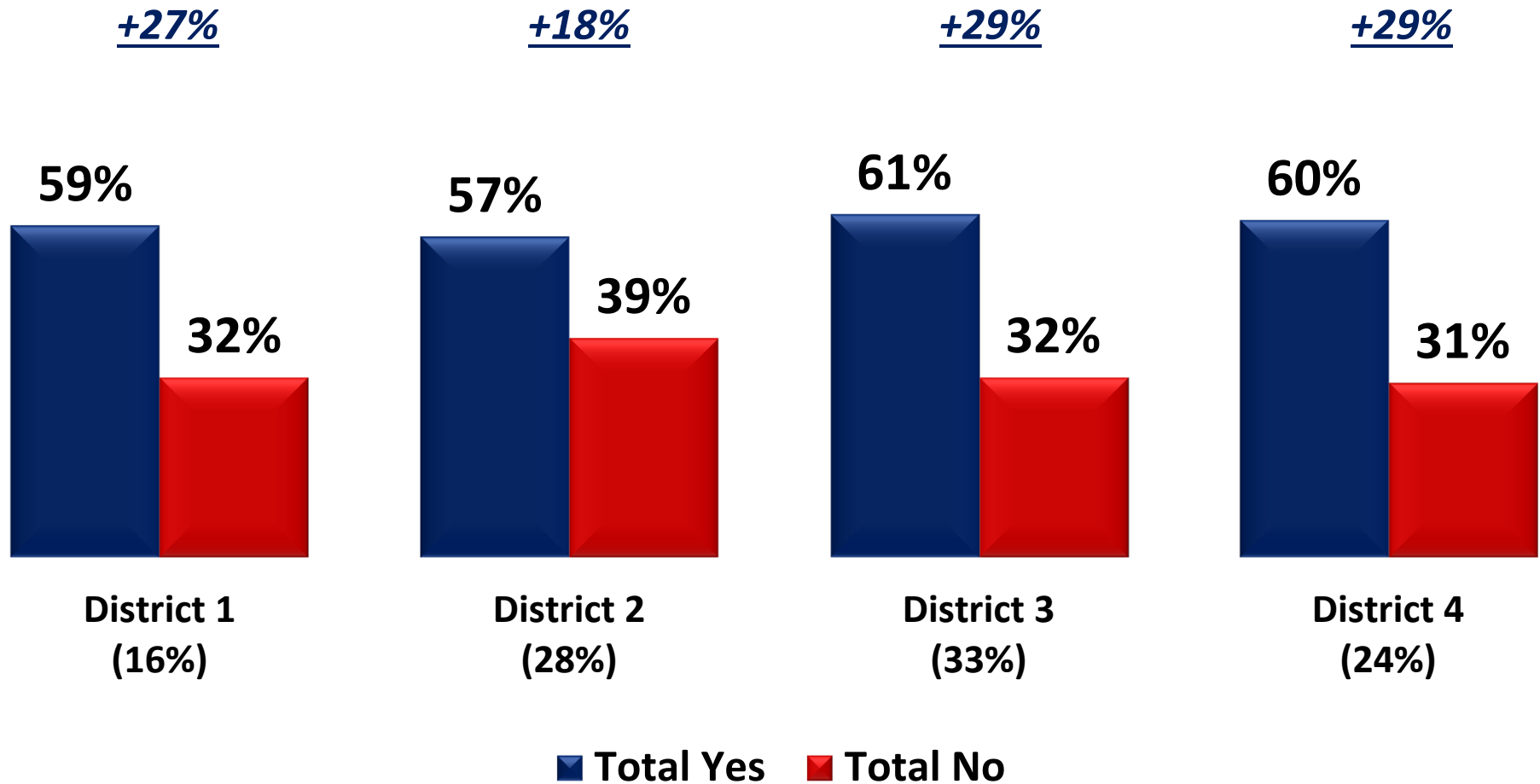
*Shall the City of Gainesville establish a trust fund to be used to renovate, improve, acquire, develop, operate, maintain and promote public parks, trails, recreational, cultural and natural areas, facilities, and programs by increasing ad valorem taxes at a rate of one-half mill, that is fifty cents per one thousand dollars of property value, with citizen oversight and public disclosure of trust fund expenses?*



*If the election were being held today, would you vote Yes in favor of or No against the following question with the title of... Gainesville Parks, Recreation, And Cultural Affairs Trust Fund?*

# There is almost no geographic difference in support levels.

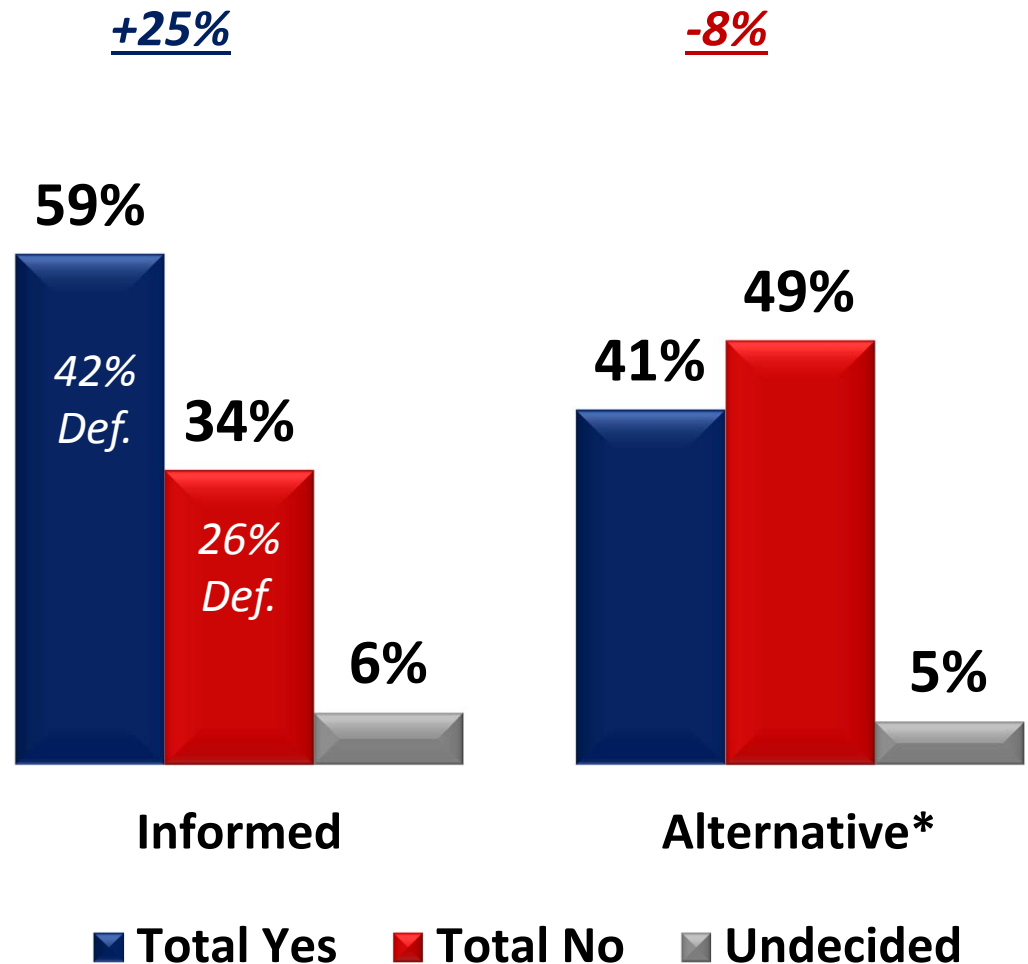
*Initial Ballot By Region*



# At three-quarters of one mill, support is likely much lower.

*There's an alternative proposal being considered to provide more funding for parks, trails, recreation centers, fields and other recreational facilities with three-quarters of one mill, which would cost the average homeowner an additional fifty-three dollars in property taxes per year.*

*If this were the only proposal on the ballot, would you vote Yes in favor or no against this proposal?*



\* Asked Only of Yes Respondents on Informal Ballot (N=186)

# POTENTIAL PROJECTS

**In order to determine where voters' priorities lie, we asked respondents the importance of funding 19 potential types of projects/programs:**

*“I am going to read you a list of projects that could be funded if voters approve this measure. As I read each one, please tell me how important it is to you that each project be funded. Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important to you?”*

# Kids, quality of life and access for all are strong themes.

<i>Top-Tier Projects Ranked By Extremely Important</i>	<b>% Extremely Important</b>	<b>% Extremely/ Very Important</b>
Allowing more children opportunities for recreation in the outdoors.	<b>33%</b>	<b>72%</b>
Maintaining quality of life in the city.	<b>32%</b>	<b>71%</b>
Ensuring more parks have areas where people with disabilities can also enjoy access.	<b>29%</b>	<b>66%</b>
Increasing connections for trails and bikeways throughout the city to make walking and biking safe.	<b>29%</b>	<b>55%</b>
Maintaining and improving trails, such as the Waldo Road Trail, the Gainesville-Hawthorne Trail and the Depot Park Trail.	<b>29%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Improving and maintaining swimming pools such as at Westside Park, T.B. McPherson Center and the Martin Luther King Jr. Center.	<b>23%</b>	<b>61%</b>

# Safety, nature education and specific upgrades are middling.

<i>Middle-Tier Projects Ranked By Extremely Important</i>	<b>% Extremely Important</b>	<b>% Extremely/ Very Important</b>
Providing safety improvements at trails and parks.	<b>22%</b>	<b>56%</b>
Providing nature education opportunities for children.	<b>22%</b>	<b>55%</b>
Improving and maintaining park facilities, such as those at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center and Westside parks.	<b>19%</b>	<b>55%</b>
Extending the useful life of recreation centers by repairing and upgrading them.	<b>19%</b>	<b>51%</b>
Increasing energy efficiency by upgrading outdoor lights in parks and ball fields, and interior lights at recreation centers and other facilities.	<b>18%</b>	<b>51%</b>

# Accountability provisions are very important to incorporate.

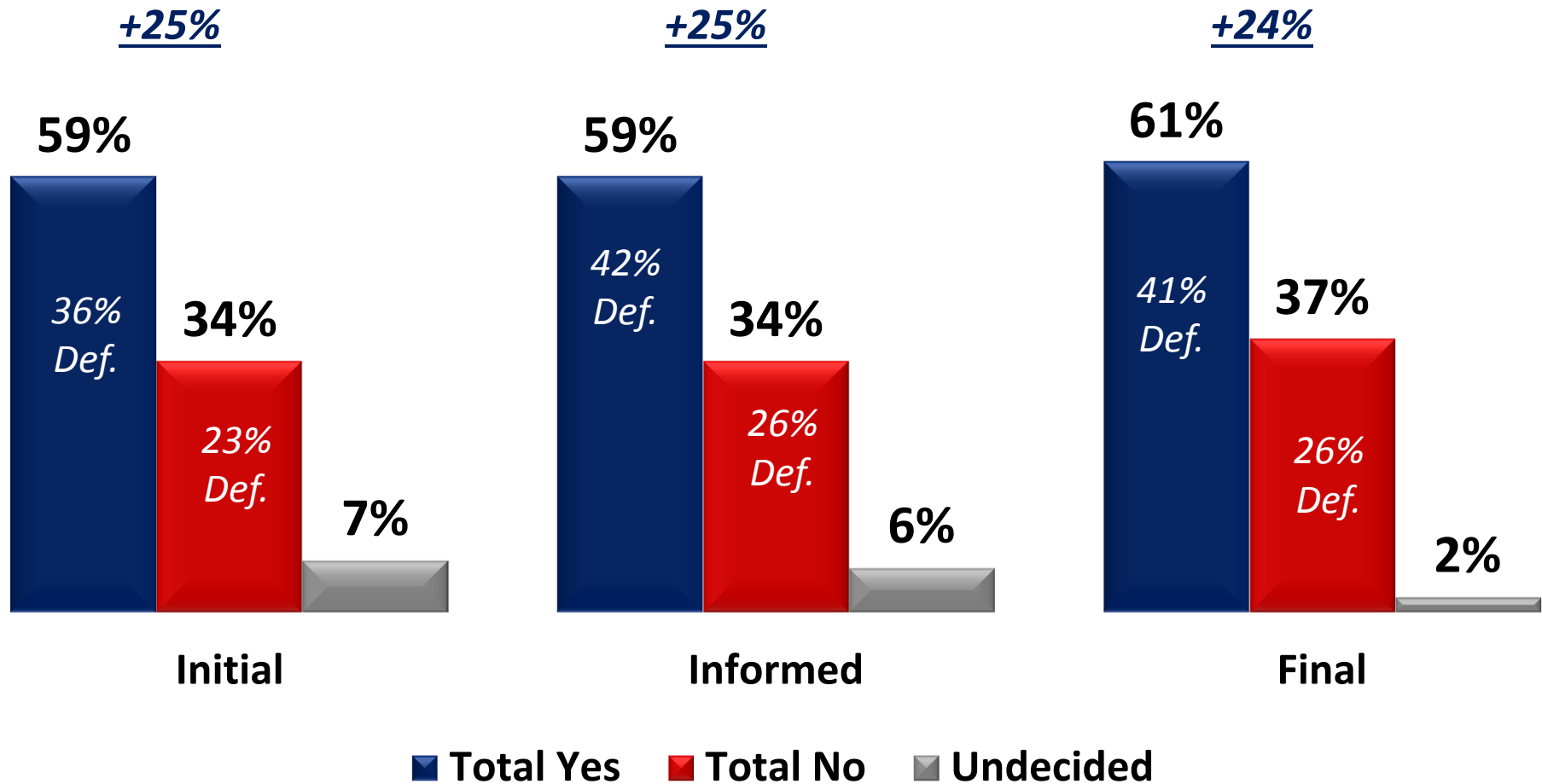
<i>Provisions Ranked By Much More Likely</i>	<b>% Much More Likely</b>	<b>% Total More Likely</b>
<b>Full public disclosure of all expenditures will be required.</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Decisions about how funds are spent will be based on recommendations made by the citizens advisory committees who studied cultural, parks and recreation needs in our area.</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>Conduct an annual independent audit and make it available to the public.</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>A sunset or automatic expiration of the tax in 15 years.</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>55%</b>

*The proposal COULD also include a number of provisions, so for each of the following please tell me if you would be more or less likely to vote Yes in support of the measure if it included a provision for...*



# The measure essentially retains the same level of overall support throughout.

## Ballot Movement



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**PUBLIC OPINION  
STRATEGIES**



# County Survey

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## Privately Funded: Public Opinion Research

Ideal to poll on any options that may be brought forward and approved for consideration by either Commission.

Focus is primarily on reauthorization a Wild Spaces/Public Places option, ½ cent sales tax with county portion primarily to fund natural lands, municipalities focused on recreational facilities. Some other uses that have been discussed publicly will also be tested.

November, 2016 is the election being considered.



# Recommendations

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While the city could likely pass a 0.5 mill property tax on the March ballot, chances of success are likely greater on the November 2016 ballot.

The Trust for Public Land recommends that if the County does not move forward with a sales tax option in November and the City wishes to pursue its own funding source, a November 2016 property tax measure would be the option most likely to succeed. A funding source of 0.5 mill appears viable based on available information.

# Reminder of Next Steps

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Feasibility Research

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# Questions?

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