

Agenda: October 7, 2004

To: Regional Transportation Commission
From: Linda Wilshusen, Executive Director
RE: Post Election Poll on Measure J, the Local Transportation Improvement Act

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Approve planning for and conducting a post-election poll in the event Measure J does not pass on November 2;
 2. Approve a resolution (Attachment 1) authorizing a budget amendment and the expenditure of \$2,500 for poll planning and up to an additional \$20,000 for conducting a post-election poll in the event Measure J does not pass on November 2; and,
 3. Authorize the Executive Director to execute an agreement with a polling consultant to conduct a post-election poll in the event Measure J does not pass on November 2.
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BACKGROUND

In designing the public information program on Measure J, RTC staff and consultant Eileen Goodwin initially proposed planning for a post-election poll of voters in the event Measure J does not pass on November 2.

At the time the poll concept was introduced, Commissioners were focused on the content of the public information program and did not want to divert funds set aside for the Measure J outreach program on a poll. However, in light of this focus, the merits and/or drawbacks of conducting a post-election poll were not fully discussed.

DISCUSSION

Both Ms. Goodwin and Commission staff continue to believe that the results of a post election poll could be a tremendous asset in planning for future local transportation ballot measures in the event Measure J does not pass on November 2.

Post Election Poll on Measure J

A post-election poll would query people who voted on Measure J about the main reasons why they voted the way they did and demographic information. A lengthier poll could include questions to reveal what messages might have changed voters' minds about how they voted. An outline of post election poll considerations is included as Attachment 2. A suggested sample size of 600 would provide a good sample of yes votes and no votes to compare. The poll would be conducted by telephone to a sample of voters and the questionnaire length would be approximately 8-11 minutes.

Cost estimates for a post-election poll range between \$12,000 and \$20,000 depending on variables such as sample size and questionnaire length. Expanding the scope of questions (that could occur during the process of developing the poll,) would result in a higher cost. Activities to develop and plan for a post-election poll would need to begin immediately. The cost to undertake these planning activities is \$2,500 even if the measure passes and a post-election poll is not actually needed or conducted.

Staff recommends that the Commission budget up to \$22,500 to plan and conduct a post election poll of voters. In the event that Measure J passes, only \$2,500 to develop a questionnaire and plan for the poll would actually be spent. Commission reserves are adequate to fund this post-election poll. A budget amendment would be required to transfer reserves for this purpose.

SUMMARY

Commission staff and consultant Eileen Goodwin believe that the Commission would benefit from the results of a post election poll of voters in the event that Measure J does not pass on November 2. Commission reserves are adequate to fund this project.

Attachments:

1. Resolution
2. Outline of Poll Requirements

Prepared by: Tegan Speiser, Sr. Transportation Planner