



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

County Executive Office

1195 Third Street
Suite 310
Napa, CA 94559
www.co.napa.ca.us

Main: (707) 253-4421
Fax: (707) 253-4176

Nancy Watt
County Executive Officer

MEMORANDUM

To:	Board of Supervisors	From:	Helene Franchi
Date:	February 25, 2016	Re:	BOS Agenda of March 1, 2016 Item 9C – Set Matter 10:30 AM

Attached is a memorandum from the County's consultant TBWB Strategies related to the polling results and their recommendation regarding a potential ballot measure for jail improvements.

To: Board of Supervisors, County of Napa
From: Jared Boigon, TBWB Strategies
Date: March 1, 2016
Re: Recommendation regarding potential ballot measure for jail improvement

The following is our recommendation based on several months' of feasibility work regarding a potential ballot measure to fund jail improvement, beginning with a voter survey conducted by FM3 Research, August 31-September 3, 2015, extending through dozens of local outreach meetings in the community, discussions with staff about various options, and ending with a countywide tracking poll conducted by FM3 Research between February 6-9, 2016.

Scientific Findings:

A majority of Napa County voters, but far short of 2/3, are inclined to approve a \$125 million bond measure for jail improvement in a June or November 2016 election (53% and 52% respectively in the most recent survey). These numbers are similar to the results from the 2015 survey. When the bond amount is decreased to \$60 million, support increases to 63%, still far short of the 66.7% mark required for passage. The presence of negative arguments brings support for a bond below even majority support.

The same recent survey shows a majority of voters would support a 1/2-cent sales tax (53% and 54% in June & November). If told tourists and visitors would bear the tax burden, support grows significantly to 65%, though falls short of the 66.7% plateau required to pass. After negative arguments are presented, a narrow majority still supports a 1/2-cent sales tax.

Community input:

We also understand that County officials have had numerous, detailed conversations with stakeholders throughout the County regarding the challenges of the current facility as it relates to effective rehabilitation of offenders, as well as officer safety. The Napa County Grand Jury has indicated that the existing jail is absolutely inadequate and urges action to improve it.

Voters and community members see a real need to address critical issues, particularly:

- Mental health and addiction counseling for inmates
- Job training and skills development to help them re-enter society as productive citizens
- Strategies to help young offenders (18-25), and fight the influence of gangs
- Specialized support for the small number of veterans in our jail who have had trouble with the transition back home
- Reducing overcrowding and improving the safety of officers
- Moving the jail out of downtown.

Voters and community members have also expressed that the optimal solution (\$125 million) simply sounds too expensive.

Conclusion:

Both polling and community input indicate that the optimal measure, raising \$125 million, whether a bond or sales tax, will not pass in either June or November. We believe that – even if a strong, well-funded campaign in favor of the measure were to emerge – neither of the proposed measures would reach the 66.7% approval percentage required for them to pass. June and November election dates would likely return very similar election results in any of the above scenarios.

Recommendation: a general use, 1/4-cent sales tax measure in June.

We recommend the Board of Supervisors consider a potential general use 1/4-cent sales tax measure for purposes including:

- Improving mental health and addiction treatment for inmates before their release
- Providing job skills and training to inmates to prepare them for release
- Improving guidance and rehabilitation of young offenders to get them back on track and help fight gangs
- Provide specialized services for veterans in our jail
- Reducing crowding and improving the safety of officers
- Removing residential prison population from downtown Napa

Creating a measure for general but not specific use would give the Board and County the flexibility to do the best job possible of addressing the limitations of the current jail, despite less funding. It would also allow the Board and County to support external programs or projects outside the jail that might help achieve many of these same goals. Finally, unlike a bond, sales tax revenue would be flexible enough to support some of the non-facility efforts needed to support a scaled-back effort to move residential prison population out of downtown Napa.

A majority of voters have indicated support for a sales tax measure to achieve these goals, and they appreciate that tourists and visitors would help bear the cost, unlike a bond measure. This funding source would also allow the Board of Supervisors to maintain an overall level of flexibility in the use of limited funds that the other methods don't allow.

We recommend placing this measure on the June ballot for two reasons: first, because the conversation has been taking place in the community steadily over the past few months, so the issue is ripe today, and second, so that the Board will know as soon as possible whether there is additional funding available to address the urgent need to improve the jail, better rehabilitate offenders, and get prisoners out of downtown.