2013 Larkspur Finance Measure Survey

Survey Conducted: February 6-18, 2013
Project Objectives

- The Lew Edwards Group has represented more than 150 public agencies over the past 16 years. More than two-thirds of LEG’s practice is in planning revenue measures for public agencies.
- LEG has been working with the City to evaluate the feasibility of a potential local funding measure to maintain city services and address street and road infrastructure needs.
- LEG and opinion research firm FM3 have conducted two community surveys of Larkspur residents to identify community service priorities and possible local funding solutions beginning in July of 2011.
- The team’s current objective was to conduct a community survey to provide the City with input on the community’s funding priorities -- including street infrastructure needs -- and assess the viability of a potential local funding measure in November of 2013.
Overview of Results

- A one-cent General Purpose sales tax measure in November 2013 to maintain essential City services and address local streets and roads needs, with the option of bonding for infrastructure, is viable.

- Respondents were much less concerned about state budget cuts affecting Larkspur services and the condition of the local economy than in 2011.

- An anticipated Hospital bond has minimal effect on the viability of the City’s funding measure.

- Consistent with Lew Edwards Group “Best Practices” community engagement, outreach and education should be planned to maintain measure viability.
Methodology

- FM3 completed 356 telephone interviews with likely November 2013 voters in Larkspur
- Interviews conducted between February 6-18, 2013
- Margin of sampling error of +/- 5.2%
- Due to rounding, not all percentages sum to 100%
- Interviews were conducted on landlines and cell phones
Key Findings

- Respondents were a little more optimistic about life in Larkspur than they did two years ago.
- They continue to view City government favorably and satisfactorily.
- Respondents expressed support (60%) for a one-cent, general purpose sales tax measure in Larkspur.
- The presence of a Marin General Hospital bond measure appears to have a slight impact on a City sales tax measure, but not enough to affect viability.
- Support remained consistent after for the measure throughout the survey.
- Respondents perceived information about maintaining public safety and improving the City’s poorly-rated streets as the most compelling reasons to support a local funding measure.
Living in Larkspur
Overall impressions of the City have improved since 2011.

Would you say that things in the City of Larkspur are generally headed in the right direction or are they pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

2011
- Right direction: 63%
- DK/NA: 23%
- Wrong track: 14%

2013
- Right direction: 75%
- DK/NA: 15%
- Wrong track: 10%
Most continue to say the City is doing a “good” job.

The overall job Larkspur City Government is doing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Excel.</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Only Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>DK/NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management of the Larkspur City budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Excel.</th>
<th>Good</th>
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<th>Poor</th>
<th>DK/NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, please rate each of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management of the Larkspur City budget</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall job Larkspur City Government</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Large majorities continue to trust the City’s management of tax dollars.

I trust the City of Larkspur to properly manage our tax dollars.

Bar chart showing trust percentages for 2011 and 2013.
The condition of streets and roads is a top concern in Larkspur.

I'd like to read you some problems facing the City of Larkspur that other people have mentioned. Please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem in Larkspur.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Ext./Very Ser.</th>
<th>Smwt./Not Too Ser.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deteriorating streets and roads</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potholes</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cost of pensions for retired public employees</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earthquake safety at City Hall and the adjacent fire station</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste and inefficiency in local government</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs and the local economy</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State budget cuts that reduce the money available for local city services</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount people pay in local taxes</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount people pay in sales taxes</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City's budget</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q6. Split Sample
Respondents were generally less concerned about the City’s budget...

The cost of pensions for retired public employees

- 2013: Ext. Ser. = 14%, Very Ser. = 18%, Smwt. Ser. = 28%, Not Too Ser. = 18%, DK/NA = 22%
- 2011: Ext. Ser. = 25%, Very Ser. = 26%, Smwt. Ser. = 11%, Not Too Ser. = 21%, DK/NA = 18%

Waste and inefficiency in local government

- 2011: Ext. Ser. = 10%, Very Ser. = 17%, Smwt. Ser. = 21%, Not Too Ser. = 32%, DK/NA = 19%

State budget cuts that reduce the money available for local city services

- 2013: Ext. Ser. = 12%, Very Ser. = 35%, Smwt. Ser. = 31%, Not Too Ser. = 16%, DK/NA = 7%
- 2011: Ext. Ser. = 21%, Very Ser. = 41%, Smwt. Ser. = 21%, Not Too Ser. = 8%, DK/NA = 10%

The City’s budget

- 2013: Ext. Ser. = 6%, Very Ser. = 18%, Smwt. Ser. = 26%, Not Too Ser. = 22%, DK/NA = 29%

I'd like to read you some problems facing the City of Larkspur that other people have mentioned. Please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem in Larkspur. Split Sample
6b. I’d like to read you some problems facing the City of Larkspur that other people have mentioned. Please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem in Larkspur. Split Sample
Interest in a Proposed General Purpose Local Funding Measure
Ballot Language Tested

Larkspur Essential City Services Measure

To maintain essential City services, including:

- Police and fire protection and 911 emergency and medical response;
- Repairing aging and deteriorating neighborhood streets, roads and potholes;
- Clearing hazardous and flammable brush to prevent fires and improve emergency vehicle access;
- Repairing storm drains; and
- Other general services;

Shall the City of Larkspur enact a one cent sales tax for 20 years with authority to incur debt to accelerate infrastructure projects, annual audits, citizens oversight, and no money for Sacramento?
Three in five were supportive of a general purpose, one-cent Larkspur sales tax measure.

If there were an election today, do you think you would vote “yes” in favor of this measure or “no” to oppose it?

- Definitely yes: 35%
- Probably yes: 18%
- Undecided, lean yes: 7%
- Undecided, lean no: 5%
- Probably no: 8%
- Definitely no: 21%
- Undecided: 6%

Total Yes: 60%
Total No: 34%
There is no difference in overall support at a lower sales tax amount.

**One Cent Sales Tax**
- Definitely yes: 35%
- Probably yes: 18%
- Undecided, lean yes: 7%
- Undecided, lean no: 5%
- Probably no: 8%
- Definitely no: 21%
- Undecided: 6%

**Total Yes:** 60%

**Total No:** 34%

**¾ Cent Sales Tax**
- Definitely yes: 40%
- Probably yes: 13%
- Undecided, lean yes: 7%
- Undecided, lean no: 6%
- Probably no: 7%
- Definitely no: 22%
- Undecided: 5%

**Total Yes:** 60%

**Total No:** 35%

3 & 3/4 combined. If there were an election today, do you think you would vote "yes" in favor of this measure or "no" to oppose it?
Support is similar to 2011.

One Cent Sales Tax

- **2013**
  - Def. Yes: 35%
  - Prob. Yes: 18%
  - Undec., Lean Yes: 7%
  - Undec., Lean No: 5%
  - Prob. No: 8%
  - Def. No: 21%
  - Undecided: 6%

- **2011**
  - Def. Yes: 36%
  - Prob. Yes: 19%
  - Undec., Lean Yes: 9%
  - Undec., Lean No: 23%
  - Prob. No: 6%
  - Def. No: 6%

¾ Cent Sales Tax

- **2013**
  - Def. Yes: 40%
  - Prob. Yes: 13%
  - Undec., Lean Yes: 7%
  - Undec., Lean No: 6%
  - Prob. No: 7%
  - Def. No: 22%
  - Undecided: 5%

- **2011**
  - Def. Yes: 42%
  - Prob. Yes: 19%
  - Undec., Lean Yes: 7%
  - Undec., Lean No: 19%
  - Prob. No: 5%

½ Cent Sales Tax

- **2011**
  - Def. Yes: 60%
  - Prob. Yes: 40%
  - Undec., Lean Yes: 6%
  - Undec., Lean No: 7%
  - Prob. No: 26%
  - Def. No: 22%
  - Undecided: 5%

3 & ¾ combined. If there were an election today, do you think you would vote "yes" in favor of this measure or "no" to oppose it?
Impact of a Potential Marin General Hospital Bond Measure
To assess the impact of a potential Marin General Hospital modernization bond measure, survey respondents were asked to consider both measures at the same time.
Support for a City sales tax measure is was only slightly affected by the hypothetical bond.

If these two measures were on the ballot at the same time, you could choose to vote yes on both of these measures, vote yes on only one of the measures and no on the other, or vote no on both. Do you think you would vote yes on both measures, vote yes on only one of the two measures, or vote no on both measures?

Yes only on the Larkspur one cent sales tax measure
- Yes on both: 34%
- Yes only on the Marin General Hospital bond measure: 10%
- No on both: 27%
- DK/NA: 8%

Total Yes on Larkspur One Cent Sales Tax Measure: 55%
Service Priorities
Maintaining emergency services and improving the condition of roads are top priorities.

I am going to read you a list of ways in which the funds generated by this ballot measure could be spent in Larkspur. Please tell me how important you feel that benefit is to you personally: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important.

- Maintaining 911 emergency response times: Ext./Very Impt. 78%
- Maintaining emergency medical response times: Ext./Very Impt. 75%
- Maintaining police protection: Ext./Very Impt. 73%
- Maintaining fire protection: Ext./Very Impt. 75%
- Repairing streets and roads: Ext./Very Impt. 68%
- Repairing potholes: Ext./Very Impt. 57%
- Maintaining and repairing neighborhood streets and roads: Ext./Very Impt. 65%
- Maintaining storm drains to prevent spills of contaminated water into the Bay: Ext./Very Impt. 64%
Building a new library/community center and improving bicycle safety are comparatively less important.

- Maintaining and repairing major boulevards and roads: 64%
- Clearing flammable brush that poses a serious fire hazard to our neighborhoods: 58%
- Clearing hazardous and flammable brush to prevent fires and improve emergency vehicle access: 58%
- Maintaining City Library services: 49%
- Making earthquake safety repairs to the 100-year-old City Hall and fire station buildings: 41%
- Repairing storm drains: 50%
- ^Improving accessibility on streets and sidewalks for seniors and persons with disabilities: 43%
- Building a new public library and community center: 29%
- Improving safety for bicyclists: 36%

Q8. *Not Part of Split Sample
Reactions to Additional Information
Information about public safety and the City’s street conditions were compelling.

**(FUTURE – REPAIRS EXPENSIVE)** Delaying maintenance and repairs to Larkspur’s local streets and roads only increase costs in the long-run – by as much as 40 times higher. This measure will help the City repair our deteriorating streets before the costs become even more expensive in the future.

**(PUBLIC SAFETY)** This measure is needed to preserve funding for essential services, like police and fire protection and maintaining 911 emergency and medical response times.

**(DISASTER PREPAREDNESS)** This measure will help clear hazardous and flammable brush to prevent fires and improve emergency vehicle access, improve drainage in low-lying areas, and retrofit building and bridges so Larkspur is prepared for natural disasters, such as fires, floods and earthquakes.

**(POOR ROADS - FUTURE)** In 2006, Larkspur’s streets and roads were classified as “at-risk.” Now they are classified as “poor” and tied for the worst in the Bay Area. Without this measure, more streets and roads will deteriorate and fail each year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(FUTURE – REPAIRS EXPENSIVE)</strong></td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(PUBLIC SAFETY)</strong></td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(DISASTER PREPAREDNESS)</strong></td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(POOR ROADS - FUTURE)</strong></td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. I am going to read you some statements from people who support this ballot measure. Please tell me whether you find it very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not convincing as a reason to support such a measure. ^Not Part of Split Sample
Accountability provisions – such as audits and expenditure reports – were also highly valued.

(Accountability) This measure includes tough accountability provisions such as requiring independent audits and publishing of expenditure reports. These fiscal safeguards will ensure funds are used as promised.

(Road Conditions - Safety) Many of Larkspur’s neighborhood streets and roads are not only deteriorating and riddled with cracks, but also on steep hillsides. This measure is needed to fix these hazardous road conditions that not only put motorists at risk, but also buses, cyclists and police and fire safety vehicles.

(Poor Roads – Property Values) A recent study found that Larkspur has the worst streets and roads in Marin County and tied for the worst in the entire nine-county Bay Area. We need this measure to repair our aging and deteriorating local roads and streets and maintain our property values.
Support remained consistent throughout the survey.

Initial Vote 2nd Test 3rd Test

Total Yes 60% 61% 60%

Total No 34% 35% 36%

Undecided 6% 4% 4%
Consultant Recommendations

• As statute only permits proceeding with a General Purpose Measure during a regular Municipal Election, if the City does not proceed in November 2013, it must wait until November 2015 unless a Fiscal Emergency is declared.

• The City should plan for placement of a general purpose sales tax that includes the option of bonding for infrastructure on the November 2013 ballot.

• Community engagement efforts should focus on service and road needs.
Next Steps/Community Engagement & Outreach Recommendations

• **Informational Speakers’ Bureau** – Provide information to community groups in the City’s regarding the need to maintain public safety services and repair local streets and roads.

• **Opinion Leader Communications & Outreach** – Update your database of Larkspur community leaders for direct and personalized communication.

• **Website** – Develop messages, facts and information about the city’s effort to maintain Larkspur’s public safety/disaster preparedness services and street/road repair for placement on the City’s website.

• **Media Response & Earned Media** – Informational messages, should be incorporated into all media materials with the goal of informing the media and public.

• **Informational Mailings** – A variety of social, media and public information activities should be implemented, including informational mailings.
For more information, contact:

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