



**CREATIVE
ENTOURAGE**
RESEARCH

**CITY OF BRENTWOOD
COMMUNITY SURVEY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
FALL 2020**

INTRODUCTION

In August 2020, Creative Entourage conducted an online survey of households in the City of Brentwood. The purpose of the survey was to better understand residents' opinions regarding a possible use tax proposal by the City. Residents were asked to share their input to provide City of Brentwood leaders with important feedback regarding the possible proposal. Just short of four hundred (395) surveys were completed. Residents were informed of the survey by mail, email, the City's website, social media and text messaging.

PERCEPTIONS OF CITY SERVICES

Very large majorities rated the City's list of services as excellent or good: police protection (92%), neighborhood street maintenance (81%), emergency medical and fire (84%), economic development (66%), trash collection (94%) and parks and recreation (90%). For only two services did the combined not so good or poor responses exceed ten percent: economic development at 20% and neighborhood street maintenance at 17%.

POSSIBLE USE TAX PROPOSAL

Respondents were asked about a possible use tax proposal at two times in the survey – once very early in the survey (the second question) and then again toward the end of the survey.

At the beginning of the survey, 31% indicated they would strongly favor or favor a use tax proposal with 51% being strongly opposed or opposed. Not surprising, given the complex nature of the proposal and limited knowledge about it at the time of the survey, 18% were undecided.

Following questions that introduced some facts and figures about the possible use tax, respondents were again asked about it toward the end of the survey. On this reconsideration question, support increased to 49% (from 31%, with 34% being opposed and 17% undecided).

CONCERNS ABOUT COVID

Respondents asked, given the challenges of COVID-19, "how concerned are you about Brentwood and its ability to provide quality services to its residents – are you very concerned, moderately concerned, not very concerned or not at all concerned?" In response, 36% said very or moderately concerned with 62% not very or not at all concerned and 2% didn't know.

FACTS ABOUT USE TAX PROPOSAL

Respondents were presented with facts about the possible local use tax. For each, they were asked to indicate whether it made them much more inclined to support a use tax proposal, somewhat more, somewhat less, or much less inclined to support a proposal. Presented below is the **combined more and somewhat more inclined** for each of these questions:

48% Maplewood, Richmond Heights and Clayton residents already approved and currently collect the use tax.

62% The vast majority of use tax revenue comes from businesses making large out-of-state or online purchases, not from individuals.

45% The state of Missouri already collects a use tax. This would add the municipal, or Brentwood, portion.

66% No one will ever pay both taxes. This is not an additional sales tax. When making a purchase, you will either pay a local sales tax or the use tax.

62% The use tax levels the playing field for local businesses by making the tax collected on out-of-state or online purchases the same as when buying something inside the city of Brentwood.

59% In many cities across Missouri, the revenue generated from the use tax makes up for the revenue lost to online retailers that do not already charge local sales tax.

65% Many large online retailers already collect and pay sales taxes, so this will not impact the amount you pay on these purchases.

60% This is not an additional sales tax collected by Brentwood businesses. This use tax would be placed on goods that are currently untaxed and purchased out-of-state for use here in Brentwood.

ABOUT USE TAX PROPOSAL

Respondents were presented “statements that people have made about the possible proposal for a Brentwood use tax” and asked if they strongly agreed, somewhat agreed, somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed with each. Presented below is the **combined strongly and somewhat agreed**.

55% The use tax provides a fair and level playing field for local businesses since local taxes will also be collected on all online and out-of-state purchases.

60% Given more and more online sales, the use tax is a kind of insurance policy for Brentwood, helping make sure there is sufficient revenue to support quality city services.

61% When large companies develop property in Brentwood, such as will happen on Manchester Road with the Brentwood Bound plan, they will pay our local use tax on out-of-state purchases of materials and supplies.

53% There will be a lot of items on the November ballot; this is one proposal that will allow us to protect our city during these very uncertain times.

35% This proposal is confusing, plus the city does not need the revenue.

58% We just passed tax proposals in Brentwood for our city and for our school district. We don't need another.

53% This is virtually free money for our city – money mostly paid by large businesses making out-of-state and online purchases. That's why the use tax is so popular in Clayton, Richmond Heights, Maplewood and other cities across Missouri.

61% This proposal will help make up for lost city revenue resulting from ever-increasing e-commerce or online sales.

56% The use tax closes a kind of sales tax loophole, collecting the same tax rate on out-of-state and online purchases as is collected from local retailers.

52% Passing this proposal will ensure that quality city services will be maintained and neighborhoods will remain strong during these very difficult times.

SURVEY RESULTS



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Q1 For each of the following services, evaluate the performance of the City of Brentwood as either excellent, good, not so good or poor.

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	NOT SO GOOD	POOR	UNDECIDED/DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Police Protection	52.91% 209	40.00% 158	2.28% 9	0.51% 2	4.30% 17	395
Neighborhood Street Maintenance	20.76% 82	60.25% 238	12.15% 48	5.32% 21	1.52% 6	395
Emergency Medical and Fire	58.73% 232	25.06% 99	0.76% 3	0.00% 0	15.44% 61	395
Economic Development	17.47% 69	48.35% 191	15.19% 60	4.56% 18	14.43% 57	395
Trash Collection	53.92% 213	40.00% 158	2.53% 10	2.28% 9	1.27% 5	395
Parks and Recreation	45.57% 180	44.81% 177	4.30% 17	0.25% 1	5.06% 20	395

Q2 Recently there’s been discussion of placing a “use tax” proposal on the ballot in Brentwood. The use tax is a sales tax included on some online and purchases made from out-of-state companies. Is this a proposal you would strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Favor	9.37%	37
Favor	21.52%	85
Oppose	21.01%	83
Strongly Oppose	29.87%	118
Undecided/Don't Know	18.23%	72
TOTAL		395

Q3 Given challenges with COVID-19, how concerned are you about Brentwood and its ability to provide quality services to its residents — are you very concerned, moderately concerned, not very concerned or not at all concerned?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very Concerned	6.08%	24
Moderately Concerned	30.38%	120
Not Very Concerned	41.52%	164
Not At All Concerned	20.00%	79
Undecided/Don't Know	2.03%	8
TOTAL		395

Q4 Listed below are possible facts about the local use tax. For each, indicate whether it makes you much more inclined to support a proposal for a Brentwood use tax, somewhat more, somewhat less, or much less inclined to support a proposal.

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

	MUCH MORE INCLINED	SOMEWHAT MORE INCLINED	SOMEWHAT LESS INCLINED	MUCH LESS INCLINED	UNDECIDED/DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
No one will ever pay both taxes. This is not an additional sales tax. When making a purchase, you will either pay a local sales tax or the use tax.	31.47% 124	34.77% 137	6.09% 24	16.50% 65	11.17% 44	394
The vast majority of use tax revenue comes from businesses making large out-of-state or online purchases, not from individuals.	27.41% 108	35.03% 138	8.88% 35	18.53% 73	10.15% 40	394
Maplewood, Richmond Heights and Clayton residents already approved and currently collect the use tax.	17.05% 67	30.79% 121	11.96% 47	21.37% 84	18.83% 74	393
The state of Missouri already collects a use tax. This would add the municipal, or Brentwood, portion.	14.72% 58	26.90% 106	17.77% 70	24.87% 98	15.74% 62	394

Q5 Listed below are possible facts about the local use tax. For each, indicate whether it makes you much more inclined to support a proposal for a Brentwood use tax, somewhat more, somewhat less, or much less inclined to support a proposal.

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

	MUCH MORE INCLINED	SOMEWHAT MORE INCLINED	SOMEWHAT LESS INCLINED	MUCH LESS INCLINED	UNDECIDED/DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Many large online retailers already collect and pay sales taxes, so this will not impact the amount you pay on these purchases.	29.87% 118	34.68% 137	8.35% 33	16.71% 66	10.38% 41	395
This is not an additional sales tax collected by Brentwood businesses. This use tax would be placed on goods that are currently untaxed and purchased out-of-state for use here in Brentwood.	27.85% 110	31.90% 126	8.61% 34	20.76% 82	10.89% 43	395
The use tax levels the playing field for local businesses by making the tax collected on out-of-state or online purchases the same as when buying something inside the city of Brentwood.	25.32% 100	36.20% 143	9.62% 38	17.72% 70	11.14% 44	395
In many cities across Missouri, the revenue generated from the use tax makes up for the revenue lost to online retailers that do not already charge local sales tax.	23.54% 93	35.44% 140	10.63% 42	17.97% 71	12.41% 49	395

Q6 Below are some statements that people have made about the possible proposal for a Brentwood use tax. For each, indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	UNDECIDED/DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
When large companies develop property in Brentwood, such as will happen on Manchester Road with the Brentwood Bound plan, they will pay our local use tax on out-of-state purchases of materials and supplies.	30.38% 120	30.63% 121	10.13% 40	13.67% 54	15.19% 60	395
Given more and more online sales, the use tax is a kind of insurance policy for Brentwood, helping make sure there is sufficient revenue to support quality city services.	25.38% 100	35.03% 138	11.93% 47	16.75% 66	10.91% 43	394
The use tax provides a fair and level playing field for local businesses since local taxes will also be collected on all online and out-of-state purchases.	20.36% 80	34.86% 137	11.20% 44	16.28% 64	17.30% 68	393
There will be a lot of items on the November ballot; this is one proposal that will allow us to protect our city during these very uncertain times.	19.59% 77	33.59% 132	10.43% 41	18.32% 72	18.07% 71	393
This proposal is confusing, plus the city does not need the revenue.	14.07% 55	20.46% 80	24.55% 96	20.97% 82	19.95% 78	391

Q7 Below are some statements that people have made about the possible proposal for a Brentwood use tax. For each, indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	UNDECIDED/DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
We just passed tax proposals in Brentwood for our city and for our school district. We don't need another.	28.86% 114	28.86% 114	17.97% 71	10.89% 43	13.42% 53	395
The use tax closes a kind of sales tax loophole, collecting the same tax rate on out-of-state and online purchases as is collected from local retailers.	22.39% 88	34.10% 134	10.94% 43	14.76% 58	17.81% 70	393
This proposal will help make up for lost city revenue resulting from ever-increasing e-commerce or online sales.	21.37% 84	39.19% 154	11.20% 44	14.25% 56	13.99% 55	393
Passing this proposal will ensure that quality city services will be maintained and neighborhoods will remain strong during these very difficult times.	20.36% 80	31.30% 123	10.69% 42	18.58% 73	19.08% 75	393
This is virtually free money for our city — money mostly paid by large businesses making out-of-state and online purchases. That's why the use tax is so popular in Clayton, Richmond Heights, Maplewood and other cities across Missouri.	17.51% 69	35.03% 138	12.94% 51	15.99% 63	18.53% 73	394

Q8 Answering questions often prompts people to reflect and think differently about a possible proposal for their city. So, this is a repeat question just in case that happened with you. If the City of Brentwood placed a use tax proposal on the November ballot to collect sales tax revenue from out-of-state and online purchases, is this a proposal you would strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Favor	17.97%	71
Favor	31.39%	124
Oppose	14.18%	56
Strongly Oppose	19.49%	77
Undecided/Don't Know	16.96%	67
TOTAL		395

Q9 How long have you lived within the City of Brentwood?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0-2 years	12.41%	49
3-5 years	15.44%	61
6-10 years	13.67%	54
11-20 years	18.99%	75
More than 20 years	39.49%	156
TOTAL	395	

Q10 What are your three most common sources for information about Brentwood?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Facebook	38.23%	151
Text Message	3.80%	15
Email	18.99%	75
Nextdoor	53.16%	210
The City of Brentwood's website	46.08%	182
Direct Mail (postcard, letter, etc.)	36.20%	143
Word of mouth	33.92%	134
St. Louis Post-Dispatch	10.13%	40
The Pulse newspaper	24.30%	96
Radio/Television	4.81%	19
Don't Remember/Don't Know	5.06%	20
Other (please specify)	6.58%	26
Total Respondents: 395		

Q11 To help us better understand the employment status of our residents during the COVID-19 crisis, has anyone in your household become unemployed or temporarily laid-off?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Myself	10.38%	41
An adult member of our household (21 or older)	7.85%	31
One or more of our children	3.54%	14
Multiple household members	2.53%	10
No one	75.70%	299
TOTAL		395

Q12 In which of the following age groups do you fall?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
18-34	10.63%	42
35-49	30.38%	120
50-64	34.94%	138
65 -74	17.72%	70
75+	6.33%	25
TOTAL	395	

Q13 Are you . . .

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	42.53%	168
Female	51.14%	202
Prefer not to answer	5.32%	21
Other/Don't Know	1.01%	4
TOTAL		395

Q14 And lastly, please let us know how you heard about this survey. Was it from . . .

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Facebook	24.05%	95
Text Message	5.32%	21
An Email	33.67%	133
Nextdoor	8.61%	34
The City of Brentwood's website	2.28%	9
Direct Mail (postcard, letter, etc.)	36.46%	144
Word of Mouth	1.52%	6
Radio/Television	0.25%	1
Don't Remember/Don't Know	0.76%	3
Other (please specify)	1.01%	4
Total Respondents: 395		

Q15 Do you have any comments that you would like to share with the City?

Answered: 168 Skipped: 227