

# AWARENESS STUDY

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Prepared for  
Tohono O'odham Nation

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## INTRODUCTION

This study was commissioned by the Tohono O'odham Nation and conducted by Behavior Research Center, Inc. The purpose of the study was to measure awareness and support of the proposed West Valley Resort at Northern Avenue among registered voters.

This report is based on 400 interviews conducted with West Valley voters between September 27 and 30, 2011. Interviewing was conducted with registered voters in Maricopa County living west of the Interstate 17 alignment. The study parallels a study conducted in March 2010.

The margin of error for this study is approximately +/-5.0 percent at the 95 percent confidence interval.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Major findings from this study include:

- # Awareness of the proposed West Valley Resort and Casino is very high, with eight in ten (80%) West Valley voters knowing something about it and over one-third (36%) indicating they know “a lot” about the project.
- # In an initial test, after describing the project, its features and location, three-fourths (75%) now describe the project as “very good” (40%) or “good” (35%) for the West Valley. This is an increase from 68 percent in the March, 2011 study. By comparison, just two in ten (19%) feel it a bad project for the area.
- # In a second test, administered after going through a list of arguments that have been made by supporters and opponents of the project, voters reaffirm their support by roughly the same percentage (73-21%).
- # When asked to choose only one factor, the economic impact and new jobs to be created by the project is the dominating driver among those who support the project, with 71 percent naming this factor as the primary reason they support the project.
- # Those who do not support the project are less focused as to the primary reason they do not feel it is a good project for the West Valley.
- # By a nearly two to one margin (56% to 29%) voters dismiss legislation introduced by Congressman Trent Franks which would specifically prohibit a casino in this location as a “desperate measure,” as opposed to a “principled action.” Fifteen percent are undecided on this.
- # Respondents feel the most important considerations in whether this project should be approved are the opinions of West Valley voters and promises made to the Tohono O’odham tribe in the past. These rate a 3.9 and 3.8 mean, respectively, on a five-point scale, where 5 means “extremely important” and 1 means “not at all important.”  
  
By comparison, voters virtually dismiss the opinions of local political leaders (2.2 mean) and the opposition of other tribes (2.0).

## STUDY FINDINGS

### AWARENESS OF WEST VALLEY RESORT

Eight in ten (80%) West Valley voters are aware of the proposed West Valley Resort and Casino project, with 36 percent indicating they have heard “a lot” about it. Younger voters are least aware of the project.

TABLE 1

*“I would like to read you a description of a new hotel, resort, convention center and casino project for West Phoenix, located at the corner of Northern and 95<sup>th</sup> Avenue with direct access to Loop 101. The project will cost \$400 million to build, create 6,000 construction jobs and more than 3,000 permanent jobs when completed and will be in the heart of the growing entertainment and leisure district and is located near the University of Phoenix-Cardinals Stadium.*

*First, have you heard a lot, some, only a little or is this the first time you have heard of this project?”*

	A Lot	Some	Only A Little	First Time Heard of	<b>TOTAL AWARE</b>
<u>TOTAL</u> ~~~~~	36%	26%	18%	20%	<b>80%</b>

## INITIAL SUPPORT FOR WEST VALLEY RESORT

Fully three-fourths (75%) of voters feel the West Valley Resort is a very good (40%) or good (35%) project for the West Valley, an increase of seven points from the level of support found in the March 2010 study. The project has overwhelming support, including more than 70 percent support across all party registrations.

TABLE 2

*“It is called the West Valley Resort and will include a 400-room luxury resort including convention and meeting space, lounges and a casino. The facility will include a food court and other dining options as well as retail space.*

*In general, do you think this is a very good, good, bad or very bad project for the West Valley?”*

	Very Good	Good	Bad	Very Bad	Not Sure	<b>Total Good Project</b>
<u>TOTAL</u> ~~~~~	40%	35%	9%	10%	6%	<b>75%</b>

## SECOND TEST OF SUPPORT

After going through all the arguments for and against the West Valley Resort, we asked respondents again whether they feel the project is good for the West Valley, and the level of support remains virtually constant from the initial test, as may be seen in comparing Tables 2 and 4. In addition, this represents a seven-point increase in support and a six-point decrease in opposition from the comparable question in the March, 2010 study.

TABLE 4

*“Okay, now considering all the things we have just discussed, do you think the West Valley Resort and Casino is a good project or not a good project?”*

	Good	Not Good	Not Sure
<u>TOTAL</u> ~~~~~	73%	21%	6%

## KEY DRIVERS IN SUPPORT

Those who indicate they feel the project is a good one were read a list of the major arguments, as shown in Table 5. Clearly, the economic impact and jobs is the dominating driver. Compare with Table 8 for answers from both groups.

TABLE 5

Asked of Those Who Feel it is a Good Project

*“People we have talked to who think this project is a good idea have mentioned several primary reasons. In your own case, please tell me which of the following reasons is **the most important factor.**” (READ EACH, **ACCEPT ONLY ONE ANSWER**)*

Economic impact, especially jobs	71%
It is convenient to me	7
Not to approve it would be to go back on a promise made to the tribe by the government	5
It will be good for Glendale Sports/ Entertainment District	4
<b>All are equally important</b>	<b>12</b>
Not sure	<u>1</u>
	100%

~~~~~

## KEY DRIVERS IN OPPOSITION

Conversely, those who do not feel the project is a good one for the West Valley do not identify a single reason that drives a significant number of them to opposition. Compare with Table 8 for answers from both groups.

TABLE 6

Asked of Those Who Feel it is Not a Good Project

*“People we have talked to who think this project is a bad idea have mentioned several primary reasons. In your own case, please tell me which of the following reasons is the most important factor.” (READ EACH, ACCEPT ONLY ONE ANSWER)*

|                                                                                                          |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Tribes should not be able to create new reservation land that is unconnected to the existing reservation | 18%       |
| I oppose gambling                                                                                        | 16        |
| A casino does not belong in the middle of an urban area like this                                        | 16        |
| The resort will not pay local sales tax and development fees                                             | 8         |
| The tribe is going back on the promise all the tribes made in 2002                                       | 8         |
| The City of Glendale opposes it                                                                          | 3         |
| <b>All are equally important</b>                                                                         | <b>24</b> |
| Not sure                                                                                                 | <u>7</u>  |
|                                                                                                          | 100%      |

~~~~~

## REACTION TO CONGRESSMAN FRANKS' LEGISLATION

Respondents were read a description of the effect of special legislation introduced in the U.S. Congress by Congressman Trent Franks and asked which of two common descriptions of the measure most closely matches their point of view. By close to a two-to-one margin, voters are more likely to describe it as a "desperate measure" than to label it a "principled action."

TABLE 7

*"The West Valley Resort and Casino was first proposed nearly three years ago. Since then, politicians and other tribes have filed several lawsuits and there have been a total of seven court and federal agency rulings, all of them favoring the West Valley Resort. Now, Congressman Trent Franks, at the behest of the Glendale Mayor and local tribes, has introduced a bill in Congress to change a 1986 law that specifically allowed the Tohono O'odham tribe to buy land to replace land lost to the Painted Rock flood control project for economic development purposes. The new legislation would specifically prohibit casinos as an economic development use.*

*Which of the following best describes your opinion of Congressman Franks' legislation? (1) It is principled action based on what is best for the community, (2) It is a desperate measure designed to break a promise to protect political allies and other tribes." (READ EACH: ROTATE SEQUENCE)*

	Desperate Measure	Principled Action	Not Sure
<u>TOTAL</u> ~~~~~	56%	29%	15%

## IMPORTANCE OF FOUR CONSIDERATIONS IN WHETHER THE PROJECT SHOULD BE APPROVED

Finally, we asked voters to rate the importance of each of four considerations in whether the West Valley Resort and Casino should be approved. Here, respondents make an unmistakable statement of what is -- and is not -- important. The opinions of West Valley voters and promises made to the Tohono O'odham Nation in the past are in a virtual tie for most important consideration, both registering very high mean scores that approach four on a five-point scale. In addition, 47 percent assign past promises a rating of "five" -- extremely important, while 45 percent assign the same rating to voter sentiment.

By comparison, voters virtually dismiss the importance of the opinions of local political leaders and the opposition of other tribes.

**TABLE 8**

*"And on the same subject, please rate the importance to you of each of the following considerations in whether or not the West Valley Resort and Casino should be approved, using a five-point scale where five means it is extremely important and one means it is not at all important." (READ EACH; ROTATE SEQUENCE)*

	Not at All	2	3	4	Extremely	Mean on
	<u>Important</u>				<u>Important</u>	
	1				5	<b>Scale</b>
Opinions of West Valley voters	11%	4%	16%	19%	45%	3.9
Promises made to the Tohono O'odham tribe in the past	15	5	13	16	47	3.8
The opinions of local political leaders	47	12	18	7	13	2.2
Opposition of other tribes	54	12	13	8	9	2.0

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