

RESOLUTION NO. RES-2022-161

RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA ROSA CALLING A SPECIAL ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 8, 2022 TO SUBMIT A BALLOT MEASURE TO THE REGISTERED VOTERS OF THE CITY TO AMEND CHAPTER 3-26 OF THE SANTA ROSA CITY CODE TO EXTEND A QUARTER-CENT TRANSACTION AND USE TAX TO FUND PUBLIC SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS AND TO UPDATE PERMISSIBLE USES OF THE TAX REVENUES, REQUESTING A CONSOLIDATION OF SUCH ELECTION WITH OTHER ELECTIONS BEING HELD ON THE SAME DATE, AND DIRECTING RELATED ACTIONS

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Santa Rosa wishes to call a Special Election to present to the registered voters of the City a ballot measure, which, if approved, would authorize the continuation of a quarter-cent transaction and use tax as set forth in the proposed ordinance, attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by this reference; and

WHEREAS, since 2004, general city funding for public safety services in Santa Rosa has been supplemented by a voter-approved quarter-cent local sales tax called Measure O, set forth in Chapter 3-26 of the Santa Rosa City Code; and

WHEREAS, Santa Rosa voters approved Measure O to provide dedicated funding for public safety and violence prevention programs and for nearly 20 years these funds have been used to support fire protection, paramedics, rapid 9-1-1 emergency response, disaster preparedness, crime prevention and police services; and

WHEREAS, locally controlled public safety funding from Measure O has been critical for helping Santa Rosa recover from devastating fires and prepare for future fire seasons; and

WHEREAS, Measure O currently funds more than 25 firefighters, paramedics and law enforcement officers and supports over 400,000 hours each year of youth and family mental health, public health, violence prevention and social services; and

WHEREAS, each year, an independent citizens' oversight committee has reviewed the use of funds from Measure O and confirmed funds were spent in accordance with the provisions of the voter-approved measure; and

WHEREAS, in 2004 voters approved Measure O with a 20-year expiration date and, unless renewed by voters, approximately \$10 million in annual public safety funding will expire in 2025, requiring deep cuts to public safety services in Santa Rosa; and

WHEREAS, without Measure O funding many of Santa Rosa's firefighters, paramedics and law enforcement officers could be laid off and services for youth and families could be cut or reduced; and

WHEREAS, without Measure O funding neighborhood fire stations may close and 9-1-1 emergency response times for fires, medical emergencies, accidents and violent crimes may be impacted; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Rosa City Council believes the existing local quarter-cent sales tax that provides dedicated public safety funding should be renewed without increasing the tax rate; and

WHEREAS, if approved by two-thirds of local voters, the renewed public safety funding could be used to reduce the risk of wildfires by improving wildfire prevention, preparedness, early fire alert systems, rapid response and evacuation planning; and

WHEREAS, if approved by two-thirds of local voters, the renewed public safety funding could be used to maintain rapid 9-1-1 emergency response, fire protection services, prevent the closure of fire stations and reductions in the number of on-duty firefighters, paramedics and law enforcement officers; and

WHEREAS, if approved by two-thirds of local voters, the renewed public safety funding could be used to provide mental health counseling, wraparound services and programs to help at-risk youth and their families, including violence prevention efforts along with grants to community-based organizations; and

WHEREAS, the measure to renew the public safety funding would continue the same strong fiscal accountability provisions as required by the current Measure O, including an independent citizens' oversight committee, mandatory financial audits and public disclosure of all spending; and

WHEREAS, the measure to renew the public safety funding would continue the same method of tax collection as provided by the current Measure O; and

WHEREAS, by law, funds from the renewal measure could not be taken away by Sacramento or diverted to other purposes; and

WHEREAS, visitors who work or shop in Santa Rosa and enjoy its many benefits would also pay the sales tax, ensuring that local homeowners and renters don't shoulder the entire burden; and

WHEREAS, the measure to renew the public safety funding would not increase Santa Rosa's tax rate and will continue to add just 25¢ to a \$100 purchase; and

WHEREAS, by law, essential purchases like groceries and prescription medicine are exempt from sales tax so it is not a burden to those on fixed or limited incomes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Santa Rosa resolves, declares, determines and orders as follows:

1. A Special Election is hereby called on November 8, 2022, at which time a quarter-cent transaction and use special tax measure, as set forth in the proposed ordinance attached as Exhibit A and identified as Santa Rosa Measure No. 1, shall be submitted to the registered voters of the City of Santa Rosa.
2. The proposed ordinance shall be presented to the voters in the form of a measure entitled “City of Santa Rosa Funding for Public Safety and Violence Prevention” and printed on the ballot as follows:

Measure ____ City of Santa Rosa Funding for Public Safety and Violence Prevention

<p>To renew locally controlled funding for public safety services in Santa Rosa; reduce wildfire risk; maintain rapid 9-1-1 emergency response/ early fire alerts/ evacuation planning; provide mental health counseling/ violence prevention programs for at-risk youth/ families; and prevent reductions of firefighters/ paramedics/ law enforcement officers, shall the City of Santa Rosa’s measure be adopted extending the expiring public safety sales tax for twenty years, without increasing the 1/4¢ rate, raising \$10,000,000 annually with annual audits/ citizen oversight?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>No</p> <p>_____</p>
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3. The proposed ordinance will require a two-thirds threshold for passage.
4. In accordance with the provisions of section 10403 of the Elections Code, the City Council hereby requests that the Special Election, herein called, be consolidated with the Sonoma County Consolidated General Election to be held on November 8, 2022.
5. In accordance with the provisions of sections 10002 and 10411 of the Elections Code, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors is requested to permit and issue instructions to the Registrar of Voters of the County to take any and all steps necessary for the holding of this Special Election and its consolidation with other elections to be held on the same day in the City of Santa Rosa.
6. In accordance with the provisions of sections 10002 and 10411 of the Elections Code, the Registrar of Voters of Sonoma County is authorized to do all things necessary and required to notice, hold, and conduct the Special Election and to canvass the returns thereof.
7. The City of Santa Rosa acknowledges that the consolidated election will be held and conducted in the manner prescribed in Elections Code section 10418.
8. The City of Santa Rosa recognizes that additional costs will be incurred by Sonoma County by reason of the holding of this Special Election and its consolidation, as described above, and agrees to reimburse the County for such costs.

