

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
SUBJECT: SONOMA COUNTY ROAD TAX MEASURE

STAFF PRESENTER: RICK MOSHIER, TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC
WORKS DIRECTOR

AGENDA ACTION: DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION

ISSUE(S)

Does the City Council wish to provide staff, by motion, with any direction regarding the Sonoma County Sales Tax Measure for roads?

COUNCIL GOALS/STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Create a Strong, Sustainable Economic Base

BACKGROUND

1. The County of Sonoma voted on August 12, 2014, to place a one-quarter of one percent general sales tax measure on the March 3, 2015, ballot along with an Advisory Measure specifying the manner in which the sales tax is proposed to be spent. A copy of the staff report presented to the Board of Supervisors is attached hereto as Attachment 1.
2. The County initially had discussions with the Cities in the County to discuss allocation of the sales tax revenues and an overall plan for the use of the funds with the intent of placing the tax measure on the November 2014 ballot. Former City Manager Millison and Director Moshier were involved in those discussions. Santa Rosa, as directed by the City Council at a staff briefing, advised the County that the City may wish to allocate not more than ten percent (10%) of the City's share of the revenues to Transit.
3. As a result of polling results, the County elected to place the measure on the ballot as a general sales tax measure which only requires a majority vote with a companion advisory measure instead of a special sales tax which would require a two thirds vote.
4. The method used to allocate the revenues between the County and the cities is the formula used by the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) for



contributions to SCTA and for allocation of Measure M revenues which is based fifty percent (50%) on road miles and fifty percent (50%) on population.

5. On October 28, 2014, the Board of Supervisors voted 5-0 to rescind the prior resolution and adopted a new resolution setting an election for June 2015. The Board further decided to pursue only a general tax measure with no companion advisory measure and to reduce the term of the tax from 20 years to 5 years. Attached as Attachment 2 is a true and correct copy of the staff report submitted to the Board on October 28, 2014.
6. On November 4, 2014, the Board of Supervisors voted 5-0 to adopt a Transaction and Use Tax Ordinance imposing a general countywide transaction and use tax (sales tax) of one-quarter of one percent for a period not to exceed five years and ordering a special election consolidated with the general law city election to be conducted on June 2, 2015. Attached as Attachment 3 is a true and correct copy of the staff report submitted to the Board on November 4, 2014.

ANALYSIS

1. As discussed above, the proposed sales tax measure the County is placing on the ballot is a general tax measure. The County would legally be allowed to use the revenue for any purpose approved by the Board of Supervisors. The Advisory Measure would have provided the plan which the County has indicated it would formally adopt by entering into a contract with SCTA after the measure is approved by the voters. Although the Board has now decided not to place an advisory measure on the ballot it has indicated it still intends to follow the same proposed distribution of funds and will bring back to the Board a proposed spending plan.
2. If the City wishes to recommend or request any additional changes to the measure with respect to the proposed expenditure plan or the ballot measure, the Council should provide direction to the City Manager and/or Director of Transportation and Public Works.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the City Attorney and the Director of Transportation and Public Works that the Council discuss the proposed Sonoma County General Tax for Roads and by motion provide staff with direction, if any.

Author: Caroline L. Fowler, City Attorney

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – County of Sonoma Agenda Packet for August 12, 2014
- Attachment 2 – County of Sonoma Agenda Packet for October 28, 2014
- Attachment 3 – County of Sonoma Agenda Packet for November 4, 2014