



Maintaining a Safe and Self-Reliant Cathedral City

Council Meeting
July 24, 2024



Cathedral City

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Background – Measure K

- * On August 3, 2022 Council referred Measure K to the voters:
 - * Single purpose question requiring supermajority for approval
 - * Property tax of 15 cents per square foot on residential properties and other amounts on multi-family and non-residential properties
 - * It would have supported Cathedral City's annexation into the Desert Recreation District
 - * It received majority support of about 55% but failed due to the supermajority requirement

Background – Strategic Plan

- * Because of the strong community support for providing parks and recreation services in Cathedral City, Council adopted the following action item in the five-year Strategic Plan adopted in April 2023:
 - * **Action B-13** Develop a plan to address the need for funding for parks and recreation services through the DRD; and other resident priorities including streets, and work toward a potential funding measure in 2024

Resident Committee on Maintaining a Safe and Self-Reliant Cathedral City

- * City Manager appointed a committee to review unfunded needs in the Community
- * Cross section of residents of Cathedral City
- * 11 residents participated by attending at least one meeting
- * Meetings held October 2023 through January 2024

Committee Meetings

- * **October 26, 2023** – Budget and Finances
- * **November 16, 2023** – Desert Recreation District Services
- * **December 7, 2023** – Pavement Management Plan and Fire medical services
- * **January 11, 2024** – Review of findings and committee suggestions to address

Committee Recommendation

- * **January 11, 2024** – Topic was review of needs and committee ideas
 - * Reviewed the previous meeting topics and discussions
 - * Committee reviewed ideas including grants, public-private partnerships and single-purpose tax measures
 - * Committee ultimately coalesced around recommending a general-purpose half-cent sales tax increase(Transaction and Use Tax)
 - * Half-cent raises revenue roughly equal to what Measure K would have provided
 - * Met in a follow-up meeting on June 6, 2024 and confirmed recommendation

Uses of Revenue Increase

- * DRD Annexation, recreation services and assumption of parks maintenance, park safety and security
- * Operating costs for a community recreation center
- * Debt service costs to develop a community recreation center
- * Additional funding for neighborhood street maintenance per the PMP
- * Addition of a two-person medical response ambulance on each of the Fire department's three shifts (6 personnel total) to maintain response times in the face of increase in calls

Additional Community Input

- * Council unanimously approved funding for a community survey on a potential ballot measure
- * Survey conducted in late March of 2024
- * 433 likely voters interviewed
- * Contact methods included phone, text and email
- * Interviews conducted via phone and on-line
- * Offered in English and Spanish
- * 73% perceived a need for additional funds for the city

Community Priorities for Use of Funding

- * Preparing for, responding to, and recovering from rainstorms and other natural disasters
- * Maintaining 911 medical emergency ambulance, fire and police response
- * Maintaining fire protection and paramedic services
- * Recruiting and retaining well-trained paramedics and firefighters
- * Repairing neighborhood streets and potholes
- * Maintaining gang prevention programs
- * Protecting Cathedral City's long-term financial stability
- * Removing debris after rainstorms
- * Helping prevent property crimes, including thefts and burglaries
- * Keeping public areas and parks safe and clean

Increased Inclination to Support

- * (RESPONSE TIMES - MEDICAL) Last year alone, approximately 77% of calls to Cathedral City Fire Department have been related to medical emergencies. In a medical emergency, seconds count. This measure will ensure that Cathedral City's Fire Department's medical emergency personnel have the lifesaving equipment needed to maintain its emergency response times and continue saving lives.
- * (STREETS) Prior to this year's rainy season, independent engineers rated nearly two-thirds of Cathedral City's streets and roads as "fair," "poor," or "very poor"; the roads have only gotten worse. It is time we fund these needed street and pothole repairs before the problem gets even worse and more expensive to fix.
- * (ACCOUNTABILITY) This measure includes tough accountability provisions such as public disclosure of all spending and annual independent financial audits. These fiscal safeguards will ensure that funds from this measure will be used efficiently, effectively and as promised.

Increased Inclination to Support

- * (PROPERTY CRIME) Most recent crime data reports for Cathedral City found a five-year high with over 825 reported burglaries and thefts, including more than 250 car thefts. This measure will help maintain 911 emergency response times, and police patrols in neighborhoods and business areas to keep residents and their property safe.
- * (VISITORS) A significant amount of the funding from this measure will be paid by visitors from surrounding areas who work in Cathedral City, snowbirds who stay in the Valley, and others who visit our City to shop at Target, eat in our restaurants, or partake in community activities like the Hot Air Balloon Festival. This means people who are not Cathedral City residents will contribute their fair share to keeping the roads they drive on in good condition and our community safe while they are in our City.
- * (LOCAL CONTROL) In the last five years alone, Sacramento politicians have taken away \$30 million in funding from the City. All funds raised by this measure are legally required to be spent in Cathedral City, which will ensure local control of this revenue and provide a guaranteed source of funding for city services that cannot be taken by Sacramento.

Additional Community Input

- * In June a mailer was sent to all residences in Cathedral City inviting them to ***Join the Conversation*** by completing an on-line survey to rank priorities in order of importance
- * About 200 responses were received
- * Those ranked most important by the largest number of respondents:
 - * Recruiting and retaining paramedics and firefighters
 - * Repairing neighborhood streets
 - * Preventing property crime
 - * Preparing, responding to and recovering from natural disasters
 - * Keeping parks safe and secure

Recommended Ballot Language

Cathedral City Services Measure. Shall the measure providing funding for Cathedral City's general services such as maintaining 911 medical emergency/ambulance/fire/police response and gang prevention programs; recruiting/retaining well-trained paramedics/firefighters; repairing streets/potholes; preparing for/responding to and recovering from rainstorms/natural disasters; keeping public areas/parks safe/clean; addressing homelessness; by increasing sales tax by ½¢ providing \$5,000,000 annually until ended by voters; requiring audits, spending disclosure, funds locally controlled, be adopted?

Recommendation

- * Let the voters decide by:
- * Adopting the attached resolution referring the question to the voters
- * The City Clerk will then submit the resolution to Riverside County by the August 9 deadline



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