

Impartial Analysis

In 2004, the voters of the City of Santa Rosa approved a ¼ cent special sales tax to fund public safety and violence prevention programs. The tax was approved for a twenty-year term and is set to expire on March 31, 2025.

Measure H would extend that special tax for an additional twenty years and would expand allowable uses of tax revenues to include funding of mental health services, programs to reduce wildfire risk, and other specified safety enhancements.

Existing Tax

The existing tax generates approximately \$10 million annually. Tax revenues are dedicated to police, fire, and violence prevention and youth programs. Forty percent of tax revenues are allocated to police, 40 percent to fire, and 20 percent to violence prevention and youth programs, currently managed through the Violence Prevention Partnership and the City's Recreation Division.

Allowable uses of the existing tax include:

- Police: Funding for police officers in specified assignments; police services in specified areas (Downtown, Railroad Square and Prince Memorial Greenway); and police support, facilities and equipment;
- Fire: Funding for firefighters and paramedics; the construction and relocation of fire stations (including land acquisition, facilities design and financing); and the purchase of specialized equipment;
- Violence Prevention: Funding for in-school violence prevention programs; after school and summer programs for at-risk youth; and grants to organizations for youth and parenting programs focusing on anti-violence education, prevention and intervention, and social services in high need neighborhoods.

Tax revenues currently fund sixteen positions in the Police Department, ten positions in the Fire Department, and nine positions for violence prevention and youth programs. Tax revenues also provide annual grant funding to local community-based organizations supporting youth and families.

Measure H

If approved, Measure H would extend the ¼ cent special sales tax for an additional twenty years, to March 31, 2045.

Tax revenues would continue to be designated solely for public safety and violence prevention purposes. Current funding allocations would continue, with 40 percent to police, 40 percent to fire, and 20 percent to violence prevention and youth programs.

The measure would retain existing permissible uses of tax revenues and would add, as additional permissible uses:

- Funding for mental health response teams, services and resources;
- Funding for programs and services to reduce wildfire risk, including early fire alerts, evacuation planning, defensible space inspections and vegetation management;
- Funding for mental health counseling, wraparound services and programs for at-risk youth and their families;
- Funding to maintain rapid 911 response.

The measure would add Roseland and Southwest Santa Rosa to the current list of areas specifically identified for funding of police services.

It should be noted that while the measure allows, it does not require expenditures in all allowable subject areas.

A “yes” vote on Measure H would extend the existing $\frac{1}{4}$ cent sales tax and expand permissible uses of the tax revenues as outlined above.

A “no” vote on Measure H would allow the existing sales tax to expire on March 31, 2025.

This measure requires two-thirds voter approval for passage.

This measure has been placed on the ballot by unanimous vote of the Santa Rosa City Council.