



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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New Website Answers Questions, Provides Information About Measure Z

City sales tax increase approved by voters Nov. 8 to take effect April 1

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside has created a new website to provide information to residents and business owners about the Measure Z sales tax and will hold a special meeting on Jan. 31 to conduct a workshop on how to spend those funds.

Measure Z, a one-cent-per-dollar increase in the sales tax on taxable goods purchased in Riverside, was approved by voters on Nov. 8 and takes effect April 1.

The website – www.RiversideCA.gov/MeasureZ -- explains why Measure Z was placed on the ballot, including information on cuts that were made last summer to City services and a backlog of unfunded critical needs.

“Voters wisely chose to invest in the future of Riverside and, for that, we are grateful,” Mayor Rusty Bailey said. “Given that vote of confidence from our constituents, it is now incumbent on the City to ensure that residents are kept informed about how their money is being spent.”

Measure Z, which is expected to raise about \$50 million per year, needed more than 50 percent of votes to pass, and received 59.6 percent approval.

Now that Measure Z is poised to take effect, the City Council must determine how to spend the additional revenue. Options include restoring some or all of the budget cuts made last summer, enhancing public safety, paying down debt and taking care of critical infrastructure such as roads and tree trimming. The need to properly balance such priorities was encapsulated in the City Council’s Responsible Spending Vision Pledge approved late last year.

“We are very fortunate that our conversation will be about how to improve the quality of life in Riverside rather than how to make additional cuts,” Mayor Pro Tem Mike Gardner said. “The voters are the reason for that, and we owe it to them to use those funds in the best manner possible.”

Some of the City's unfunded critical needs that were identified during the last budget cycle included funding for repair and replacement of first responder vehicles (police and fire); funding for 60 additional police officers; repair and maintenance of City facilities, such as police and fire stations, recreation centers and libraries, the Convention Center and many others; tree trimming; and street repair and maintenance.

The City already has returned to service a Fire Department squadron that was cut during last year's budget formulation, in the interest of increasing public safety.

The Measure Z workshop is scheduled for 6 p.m. Jan. 31 at Riverside City Hall, 3900 Main Street. An update to the City's existing budget also will be provided. The meeting will be available for viewing on www.watchriverside.com or on the following cable channels: Charter Spectrum 3, Frontier 21 or AT&T U-verse 99.