



Questions & Answers

(a living document)

Measure E to be placed on the March 3, 2020 ballot to authorize a...

1/2-percent INCREASE in City's Sales Tax to avoid cutbacks and enhance critical services

Question 1: What are Yucaipa voters being asked to vote on?

Answer: Measure E ballot language:

To avoid cutbacks in Yucaipa's existing paramedic program and increased response times on emergency 911 calls; generate funds from Yucaipa visitors to benefit local residents; enhance police and fire protection; increase local youth and senior services; and fund other general services provided throughout the City like streets and parks, shall the ordinance be adopted to increase the local sales tax by one-half percent; generating approximately \$2,000,000 annually, with citizen oversight, mandatory audits, and public reporting?

Question 2: Why are these funds needed?

Answer: Beginning fiscal year 2015-16, revenues to operate and maintain Yucaipa's **Paramedic Emergency Services Program** were no longer sufficient to cover annual expenses; thus, for the past four years, the City's paramedic program has been underfunded.

In 2004, Yucaipa voters passed Measure Y, entitled "**Paramedic Emergency Medical Services Special Tax**", which was intended to cover the costs of providing these 911 emergency services for the following decade (10 years); however, there was no CPI (escalator) included in this funding Measure to control for inflation. As a result, "...the (current) Public Safety budget imbalance will grow from an estimated \$1 million annually this year (a \$725,000 shortfall for paramedics, and a \$275,000 shortfall for police when compared to the previous year's costs and after taking into account projected revenue increases for this year) to an estimated \$1.3 million in 2020, \$1.7 million in 2021, and so on," City Manager Ray Casey explains in a *Letter to Neighbors*, which is posted on the City's website.

Therefore, unless additional funding can be secured, the City will be faced with having to make significant cutbacks in its Paramedic Emergency Services Program; in turn, reducing emergency response times for 911 calls, which will impact all Yucaipa residents, especially seniors.

Question 3: How much will a half-percent increase in the City's sales tax generate?

Answer: Approximately \$2 million, annually. This will increase, over time, as the City continues to grow and new businesses and enterprise are attracted to Yucaipa.

Question 4: Will the money generated from this sales tax remain in Yucaipa to benefit Yucaipa residents?

Answer: YES. 100% of the revenue generated through this sales tax, should it be authorized by Yucaipa voters on March 3rd, will remain in the community to benefit local residents.

Question 5: Will there be citizen oversight?

Answer: YES. Measure E requires the City to form a **Citizens' Oversight Committee**, comprised of five Yucaipa residents, to monitor ALL expenditures from Measure E funding. This body will produce an annual report that will be made public. Further, the City will commission annual audits of these expenditures by an independent accounting firm, which will be posted on the City's website and made available to the public upon request.

Question 6: What is the cost to consumers of a half-cent increase in sales tax?

Answer: For every \$10,000 of purchases on taxable items (e.g., over a period of one year, for example), the added cost for purchases made in that year will be \$50.

Question 7: Are there other options available for addressing these fiscal challenges?

Answer: YES. One other option is to increase the existing annual "Special Assessment". However, this would amount to increasing property taxes and would not allow for both residents and non-residents to share in the cost of providing these critical services.

Furthermore, as explained in his Neighbor's letter, the City Manager (Ray Casey) makes note of the fact that, "Since the last increase was 16 years ago, a significant increase would be required (nearling doubling in the coming year) in order to fully fund paramedic services." Based upon the findings from the community survey, this amount of increase far exceeds the local electorate's THRESHOLD of *willingness to pay*.

Question 8: Are there additional reasons City officials are asking local voters to authorize a half-percent increase in the City's sales tax, rather than some other funding mechanism?

Answer: YES. There are a host of reasons for asking local voters to authorize a half-cent increase in Yucaipa’s sales tax vs. another funding mechanism, such as increasing the existing annual assessment that presently funds these emergency services. Four of these are:

- 1) The monies from a half-percent increase in the local sales tax will not only ensure that paramedic emergency services in Yucaipa will remain at their present level (thus, no cutbacks in paramedic services will be necessary), but these monies can also be used to provide and/or enhance other City services, such as public safety (e.g., increasing police and fire protection), services for local youth and seniors, street maintenance, maintaining community and neighborhood parks, among other general services that impact the quality of life for residents throughout the community.
- 2) Most local taxes are paid by property owners; a sales tax is paid by everyone who shops in Yucaipa, whether they are property owners, renters, or visiting the City from a neighboring community or beyond. This approach is more equitable and fair to all stakeholders because paramedic services are provided not only to residents, but also to visitors to Yucaipa.
- 3) A sales tax is one of the few mechanisms that brings money from outside the community into Yucaipa when visitors to the City frequent a local restaurant, buy gas for their automobile, and/or shop at local stores. These monies can be used to provide and enhance critical services being provided to Yucaipa residents through local government.
- 4) At the present time, Yucaipa residents are subsidizing visitors to the City when these individuals encounter a 911 emergency.

Question 9: Does Measure E include an annual escalation clause to control for normal inflation?

Answer: NO. However, the yield from a sales tax (assuming Measure E is authorized by Yucaipa voters on March 3rd) will increase, over time...as the City continues to grow AND new businesses and commercial enterprise are attracted to the community. Thus, this revenue stream will provide the City with a stable source of revenue, going forward; as such, there will be no need for an annual CPI to control for normal inflation.

Question 10: How is the City’s Paramedic Program funded, today.

Answer: At the present time, local property owners are paying an annual “Special Assessment” of \$52, per parcel of property owned, which amounts to \$4.33 per month.

In 1999, the City of Yucaipa took over fire protection and emergency services from a Special District that was authorized by voters in the then unincorporated sections of Yucaipa, in 1987. At that time, the revenues from the annual assessment that funded this Special District were reassigned to the City; however, there was NO “escalation clause” to control for inflation.

In 2004, Yucaipa voters passed Measure Y, entitled “**Paramedic Emergency Medical Services Special Tax**”, which was intended to cover the costs of providing these 911 emergency services for the following decade (10 years); here again, there was no escalation clause to control for inflation.

As a result, beginning in fiscal year 2015-16, the City' paramedic and emergency services program entered a deficit spending mode, wherein the revenue generated through Measure Y was no longer sufficient to cover the program's annual expenses.

Thus, as stated in the City's Resolution No 2019-56, which was passed unimously by City Council and authorized placing Measure E on the March 3rd ballot, "...over the past decade, the City of Yucaipa's revenues have not kept pace with the growing costs associated with providing the high quality local general municipal services and facilities that Yucaipa residents expect and deserve, including (but not limited to) emergency response services provided by CalFire."

Question 11: Who responds to a 911 call; and how is this funded?

Answer: The Yucaipa Fire Department Paramedics respond to all medical aid calls and functions as the primary paramedic provider. These services are funded through the direct special assessment, which is presently being paid by Yucaipa property owners. There is no additional "billing" to the Yucaipa citizens.

AMR, which is an ambulance service in the private sector, also responds to every medical call for service and functions as the transport ambulance provider. While AMR has at least one paramedic on board who assists with transporting care, these individuals serve under the direction of the Fire Department's paramedic. AMR bills the patient directly for their services.

Question 12: What is the current response time for emergency calls?

Answer: The Yucaipa Fire Department currently has 3 paramedic engines staffed 24/7/365 and has an average response time of slightly over 6 minutes (specifically, 6 minutes: 10 seconds).

AMR typically has 1 or 0 ambulances on standby in the City and has an average response time of 10+ minutes; at times up to 25-30+ minutes, based upon availability

Question 13: What happens if Measure E fails?

Answer: If Measure fails, City officials will be faced with having to make reductions in the paramedic emergency services presently being provided through Yucaipa's Paramedic Emergency Services Program. If the City has to eliminate 1 of its 3 paramedic engines, for example, the response time will increase by approximately 2 minutes; and, patient survivability will decrease.

Recent studies have published in the Journal of American Heart Association reports that a one-minute delay in care for critical calls leads to a 10% decrease in patient survivability.

Question 14: Did City officials reach out to local voters to seek input prior to making the decision to place Measure E on the local ballot?

Answer: YES. The City commissioned a scientific survey of local voters in September 2019. This survey made clear that most Yucaipa residents (approximately 80%) DO NOT want the paramedic emergency services cut back; only, 21% of respondents said they would prefer cutbacks, rather than authorizing an increase in the annual special assessment.

A similar ratio (80%) of Yucaipa residents reported being satisfied with the level of paramedic services presently available to the community; in fact, well over half (56%) are “extremely” satisfied. Even a higher ratio of local residents (85%) said they are satisfied with the quality of life they enjoy as a resident of Yucaipa; nearly half (48%) report being very satisfied.

Also, according to the survey, the top three concerns on the collective mind of Yucaipa voters (rank-ordered) are: (i) providing assistance to the homeless in Yucaipa, (ii) keeping crime out of the City, and (iii) proper maintenance of local streets and roads.

The two top concerns regarding the level of service being provided through the City’s **Paramedic Emergency Services Program** are:

- A desire to REDUCE response times to 911 emergency calls
- Avoid having to make cutbacks in paramedic and/or fire protection services

The City Manager, Ray Casey, said that the findings from this scientific survey played a central role in the City Council’s decision to place Measure E on the ballot; thus, allowing Yucaipa voters to decide whether or not the City should address the deficit spending situation through a modest increase in the local sale tax and, if authorized by Yucaipa voters, avoid cutbacks on the level of emergency services presently being provided to the community.

Question 15: Why the present Community Informational Outreach effort?

Answer: City officials believe it is important to inform Yucaipa residents of the complete picture of the challenges presently facing the City with respect to maintaining City’s present Paramedic Emergency Services Program and level of service, which is presently underfunded. This is important in order to ensure that local voters are positioned to make an “INFORMED decision” when voting on Measure E.

Question 16: How is the City reaching out to Yucaipa residents?

Answer: City officials believe that local residents should be fully informed regarding the level of services being provided by or through the City, including (but not limited to) fire protection, services to local youth and seniors, and ALL programs/services that are intended to maximize the quality of life one experiences as a resident of Yucaipa.

Toward that end, the present community outreach effort consists of:

- (i) The City’s Web Site
- (ii) Traditional media, including a news tabloid entitled: **Insert Name**, that will be mailed to each household throughout the City on a regular basis.
- (iii) A comprehensive Social media effort, including:
 1. *Facebook*
 2. *Twitter*

3. *Nextdoor*
4. *YouTube*
5. *Facebook Live* (on-line discussions with such City officials as the Mayor, the City Manager, the Fire Chief, Police Chief) and other “informed” individuals.

Question 17: Can I talk directly to City officials, ask questions, and/or share my thoughts and ideas regarding the needs of the City, going forward?

Answer: **ABSOLUTELY!** This can be done by calling City Hall at : (909) 797-2489 AND/OR through a FEEDBACK link that is included on City’s website at <https://www.yucaipa.org/>; and on each of the social media platforms are being used to provide information regarding Measure E to the community.

The City will also be setting up ‘live’ chats with City officials (such as the Mayor, the City Manager, the Fire Chief, Police Chief),-as well as through *Facebook Live*, which will give you the opportunity to speak directly with these individuals and pose questions in ‘real time’.

Question 18: Where can I find more information and reading materials regarding the financial challenges presently facing City officials AND the consequences of NOT addressing these challenges in a timely manner?

Answer: Please go directly to the City’s website <https://www.yucaipa.org/> and click the tab “Measure E”. All articles and related materials, including links to social media pages, can be found there. Also, the Q&A will continue to be updated as questions are received from local residents regarding Measure E and answers are provided for these questions.

Question 19: What are the social media links where I can go to secure more information about the Measure E?

Answer:

Facebook.com

<https://www.facebook.com/CityofYucaipaCA/>

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/cityofyucaipa/>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/CityofYucaipa>

Nextdoor Link:

<https://nextdoor.com/agency/city-of-yucaipa/?i=jkqddywmxztqqrzbnlft>



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