

## **City of Victorville - Measure K Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is Measure K?**

Measure K asks voters to approve a half-cent (0.5%) special transactions and use (“sales”) tax to expand public safety services within Victorville. This special tax is restricted to funding public safety services in Victorville based on an expenditure plan that includes the addition of 10 new police officers and 15 new firefighters/paramedics to the City’s forces; opening Fire Station 315 near Sunset Ridge Park; equipment, training and support for these additional personnel; and acquiring life-safety apparatus for fire services. The tax revenues (an estimated \$8.5 million per year) will supplement, not replace existing City public safety services expenditures and cannot lawfully be used for any other purpose. If approved, Measure K will raise the effective sales tax rate in Victorville from 7.75% to 8.25% (estimated to become effective on April 1, 2018).

### **What specifically would Measure K do?**

The Victorville City Council would be required to utilize Measure K revenues to fund the following public safety items:

- A minimum of 10 additional sworn deputies;
- A minimum of 15 additional sworn firefighter/paramedic personnel;
- Equipment, training and support for additional police and fire positions;
- Opening Fire Station 315 near Sunset Ridge Park;
- Establishing one additional paramedic squad;
- Future cost increases associated with current and increased service levels; and
- Replacement of select aging fire apparatus (schedule to be established).

*Note: New positions outlined above would be in addition to budgeted positions approved in the Fiscal Year 2017/2018 budget.*

### **How much would Measure K cost residents and visitors?**

Measure K proposes a half-cent sales tax, which equals 50 cents for every \$100 of purchases. As a sales tax, Measure K would be collected from residents and non-residents alike as part of the sales tax on all eligible transactions in Victorville.

### **What exclusions and exemptions apply to Measure K?**

Transactions normally excluded from sales tax would also be excluded from the half-cent tax proposed by Measure K. For example, necessities such as groceries and

medications would be excluded. Certain other exemptions apply and are more thoroughly discussed in Section 3.06.100 of Ordinance No. 2371.

**How much money would the ballot measure raise?**

Revenues from Measure K are anticipated to total \$8.5 million per year. The first year total would be less based on the effective date of the tax if enacted by the voters (anticipated to be April 1, 2018).

**Can Measure K revenues be used for something other than public safety?**

No. Funds raised through Measure K are 100% dedicated to expanding law enforcement (police), fire protection, fire suppression, and emergency medical equipment, programs, facilities, personnel and services within the City of Victorville. Any tax revenue not utilized during a particular fiscal year, or received in excess of the cost requirements to support the expenditures outlined in the expenditure plan, will be reserved for exclusive use in support of public safety services. The expenditure plan attached to Ordinance No. 2371 will be reviewed and re-adopted as part of the City's normal annual budget process. Funds must be used for public safety purposes.

**Will revenues from Measure K be used to fund existing public safety costs?**

No. Measure K revenues would supplement, not replace, the current level of public safety expenditures from the City's General Fund. Police and fire contract costs alone total \$36.9 million, roughly 63% of the city's total General Fund budget for fiscal year 2017/2018. Measure K is estimated to raise an additional \$8.5 million per year that will be used to expand safety services and provide funding for future cost increases.

**How will we know the funds are being spent as promised?**

Measure K is a special tax, which means that it comes with specific accounting and auditing requirements to ensure revenues raised by the measure are used solely for the purpose stated in the measure. An independent auditor will perform an annual verification to ensure that revenue from Measure K is being used for public safety purposes, and accounting of the special tax revenue will be reported annually.

**How does the City spend its current tax revenues?**

For the current fiscal year, 63% of Victorville's General Fund expenditures have been budgeted for public safety contracts. The remaining amount is budgeted for programs and services such as animal control, parks, recreation, public works, general government services and the associated personnel costs.

### **How has Victorville's population changed over time?**

According to California Department of Finance population estimates, Victorville's population has grown from 66,904 in 2001, to 123,565 in 2017 - an increase of 85%.

### **How has the cost of public safety services changed over time?**

By the time all negotiated salary and benefit increases are implemented in 2019, police costs will have increased by nearly 300% since 2001, while staffing levels will have only increased by 70% over the same time period. In fiscal year 2018-2019, the contract with the San Bernardino County Sheriff will cost the City an estimated \$25.5 million if the number of deputies remains at 73. Any additional deputies will cost the City approximately \$215,000 annually.

While the cost of our contract with the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District has remained relatively flat in recent years due to trimming administratively and shifting costs to the City, the City hasn't been able to replace aging and outdated equipment (estimated at \$2.3 million), or add resources to address the growing demand for fire and emergency medical services. Since 2008, the number of calls County Fire responded to grew from 12,000 per year to nearly 26,000 in 2016. Since Fire Station 315 was completed in 2009, we've not been able to staff it, nor has the funding been available for an additional paramedic squad to keep pace with call volumes.

### **What has the City of Victorville done to control its General Fund spending?**

Between 2009 and 2012, Victorville cut \$12 million in expenditures through the following steps:

- The City shed over 200 jobs through early retirement or resignation, 24 voluntary layoffs, and 90 hard layoffs.
- There were 38 demotions, including a reduction in the number of department heads from 16 to three.
- The City cut or, in some cases, completely eliminated benefits, training and travel.
- Salaries for all remaining employees were reduced by 10%, and this furlough remains in effect today.

Non-safety General Fund departments were cut by a total of 55 percent to ensure public safety funding would remain high and actually grow. From 2012 to 2016, the City also used \$10 million in reserves to protect public safety. As a result, Victorville has been at its reserve floor of five percent, per policy, for the last several years.

### **When will Measure K appear on the ballot? Who can vote on this measure?**

Measure K will appear on the November 7, 2017 Special Municipal Election ballot in Victorville. This election will be conducted both by mail and at polling locations. All registered voters in the City of Victorville are eligible to vote on this measure.

### **When is the deadline to register to vote?**

The last day to register to vote in this election is October 23. To register to vote please contact the San Bernardino County Elections Office of the Registrar of Voters at (909) 387-8300.

### **How many votes does Measure K need to pass?**

As a special tax, Measure K requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Victorville voters who vote on the measure.

### **What will happen if Measure K doesn't pass?**

Without approval of Measure K, the City Council will have to pursue alternate fire service options. Available options include re-negotiating a contract with the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District, the re-establishment of a City-provided fire department or annexation to the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District with the FP-5 parcel tax.

### **How would annexation to County Fire work?**

Annexation to County Fire would mean that the city would permanently transfer control over fire and emergency medical services to the County. In order to fund Victorville's share of the County's regional fire service model, the City would permanently shift a portion of its property tax revenue to the County and Victorville property owners would pay the associated FP-5 parcel tax of approximately \$150 per year (subject to an annual cost escalator of up to 3%).

### **How would the re-establishment of a City-provided fire department work?**

The re-establishment of a City-provided fire department would mean that fire and emergency medical services would be controlled locally by the Victorville City Council. The associated cost for services would continue to be funded by the General Fund. Earlier this year the City retained the services of Citygate Associates, LLC, to assist in developing a City-provided fire service model. In evaluating that option against the current contract with County Fire, the annual cost for personnel under a City-provided department would be less expensive (after start-up costs). While this change may free up funding to assist with fire apparatus replacement, savings to the General Fund are

not expected to be sufficient to expand fire and police services without a supplemental revenue source such as Measure K.

**I have questions about information I received from a campaign for or against Measure K. Who can I talk to about that?**

City staff is unable to answer questions about any campaign. They can only provide neutral information and facts about the measure, such as this fact sheet. For questions regarding the campaign, please contact the individual campaign for or against the measure.