

O. Approval of a Report on the Effects of Measure W

Recommendation: To approve a report summarizing the effects of Measure W.

Report on the Effects of Measure W

A resident committee, the Resident Committee on Maintaining a Safe and Self-Reliant Cathedral City met over several months in the fall of 2023 and early in 2024 to study unfunded needs in Cathedral City and explore options for addressing those needs. The committee ultimately recommended that the City Council consider placing a measure before the voters to provide a locally controlled source of funding to address the identified unfunded needs.

The City Council heard the report of the resident committee on January 24, 2024, and directed staff to proceed with further discussion on a possible ballot measure, including conducting polling in the community to evaluate the viability of a potential measure.

On February 28, 2024, the City Council authorized funding to conduct a statistically valid public opinion survey of the community to gather additional feedback on service priorities and funding needs in the community. Survey results were presented to the Council in study session on May 8, 2024. Almost three-quarters of respondents perceive the City needs additional funds; 40% indicated they saw a great need for additional funding and 33% indicated some need.

Maintaining 911 emergency response, fire protection services, and repairing streets and potholes are leading priorities for uses of funds. Following is a list of the top funding priorities deemed most important by survey respondents:

- 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
- Preparing for, responding to, and recovering from rainstorms and other natural disasters
- 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
- Maintaining city services
- Maintaining police protection

To provide a further opportunity for residents to participate in the discussion of community priorities, a web page titled *Join the Conversation* was created and residents were invited, via a mailer sent to every home in Cathedral City, to complete a survey ranking identified priorities in terms of importance to them. About 200 people completed the survey. The following list outlines the priorities ranked highest:

- Recruiting and retaining well-trained paramedics and firefighters
- Repairing neighborhood streets and potholes
- Maintaining gang prevention programs
- Preparing for, responding to, and recovering from rainstorms and other natural disasters
- Helping prevent property crimes, including thefts and burglaries
- Keeping Parks safe and secure, including addressing homelessness
- Maintaining 9-1-1 medical emergency ambulance, fire protection and police protection response

The following is the ballot language that was referred to the voters by the City Council on July 24, which has subsequently been designated as Measure W:

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?

The Council resolution to refer the measure to the voters was adopted unanimously after considerable public comment. The measure, if approved by voters, will allow the city to address the items identified by the Resident Committee on Maintaining a Safe and Self-Reliant Cathedral City, by residents through the public opinion survey and by those who completed the on-line *Join the Discussion* questionnaire.

The following table summarizes the effects of the approval of Measure W by the voters and compares those to the effects if the measure is not approved:

Effects of the Approval of Measure W	Effects of the Rejection of Measure W
The Cathedral City Fire department will be able to staff and place into service a fourth ambulance to maintain response times to medical emergencies even as calls for service increase.	The Cathedral City Fire department will continue to operate with three ambulances in service and may see slower response times to medical emergencies as calls for service increase.
Additional funding will be available for paving and maintaining neighborhood streets.	Funding for street paving and maintenance will not increase and the condition of neighborhood streets may deteriorate further.
One-half cent will be added to the local transactions and use tax (sales tax) costing taxpayers 50 cents on a \$100 purchase.	The local transactions and use tax (sales tax) rate will remain unchanged.
Additional funding of about \$5,000,000	No additional locally controlled funding

annually, which is locally controlled and not subject to takeaways by the state or other levels of government, will be available to support services in Cathedral City.	will be available for services in Cathedral City.
Funding will be available to allow Cathedral City to become a part of the Desert Recreation District providing parks and recreation services to residents and helping keep parks safe and secure.	Cathedral City will not be able to join the Desert Recreation District.
The funds provided through Measure W will be subject to annual outside audit and strict oversight by a citizen advisory committee.	There will be no Measure W funds to audit or oversee.