

City of Barstow
Questions and Answers About a Potential Revenue Measure

How is the City of Barstow performing in delivering city services and protecting the quality of life in Barstow?

The City of Barstow is dedicated to providing quality public services, promoting economic development and creating a sense of community pride among our residents. Barstow is one of the few cities in our region, and the only city in the High Desert, with our own police and fire departments. In addition, the City has been proactive in making street maintenance a top priority, updating nearly 85% of our streets and sidewalks in recent years.

Over the past decade, the City of Barstow's revenues have not kept pace with the growing costs associated with providing municipal services and facilities. Protecting the safety of our residents and maintaining a high quality of life in our community is the City's top priority. That is why the City of Barstow is currently working with the community to identify our most urgent needs, protect youth and senior programs, and retain our local police and fire departments.

What other funding options does the City have for maintaining these important services?

Over the past several years the City has reviewed several options to protect our essential city services, including reducing costs through streamlining operations and minimizing staffing levels. However, existing revenues cannot support the high-quality services that residents have come to expect. Given that our fire and police departments and essential city services account for 62% of the City's general budget, there is little left to cut.

Currently, the City is in the process of considering placing a Public Safety and Essential City Services Protection Measure on the November ballot. This one-cent sales tax measure would fall predominately on tourists and visitors passing through Barstow. Items like food and prescription medication would be exempted. This measure would cost just one penny for every \$1 purchased and would provide approximately seven million dollars annually to help support public safety and essential city services.

Didn't the City already try to pass a tax for the Fire Department?

Yes. Last year, a ½ cent sales tax earmarked for fire protection and paramedic services known as Measure J was on the November 2017 ballot. This special sales tax required two-thirds support in order to be successful. Though a majority of local voters supported this effort, it narrowly failed by a handful of votes.

The current measure being considered is a general sales tax. If supported by a majority of voters, the proceeds would be used to fund the fire and police departments as well as help the City keep up with basic repairs and maintenance to streets, storm drains and public facilities. Additionally, funds could be used to support senior and youth programs, including anti-gang and anti-drug prevention programs.

How would a tax measure help maintain local city services?

Specifically, a local funding measure would provide stability to our budget to protect the quality of services we provide the community, including:

- Providing fire protection and paramedic services
- Providing police services, including neighborhood police patrols, crime prevention and investigations
- Maintaining streets and repairing potholes
- Providing quick responses to 9-1-1 emergencies
- Helping fund senior and youth programs
- Reducing gang activity and drug-related crimes

Could the State cut or take this local funding?

No. All funds raised by a Public Safety and Essential City Services Protection Measure would be legally required to be spent in Barstow, ensuring that our tax dollars are used locally, with no money going to Sacramento. In addition, the ordinance will be written so that if the City ever loses the local fire or police departments, the sales tax would no longer be in effect.

How do I know the money will be spent on these services and programs?

The City of Barstow will create an independent citizens' committee that will meet twice a year to review income and expenses.

How much would the measure cost to residents?

A measure would cost just one penny for every \$1 purchased or \$1 for a \$100 purchase. Items like food and prescription medication are exempted from the measure. Significant portions of our local sales taxes are paid by residents from other cities who shop in our community.

How can I learn more about this proposal?

We want your input as we determine priorities for our city's future. Please call (760) 255-5178 or email us at AskUs@BarstowCA.org with any questions or comments.