



# City of Oceanside

## City of Oceanside Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q. When it comes to public services, what are the City of Oceanside's priorities?**

**A.** The City's mission is to enhance the quality of life through outstanding service to its diverse community. The City's goal is to maintain fiscally sustainable policies that support core services while improving the quality of life. To sustain our high quality of life, it is essential that we maintain city streets, fix potholes, ensure we have enough police officers, firefighter/paramedics and lifeguards to respond quickly to 9-1-1 emergencies and reduce gang activity and drug-related crime, keep public areas clean and free of graffiti and repair, maintain and enhance public infrastructure including sidewalks and storm drains.

### **Q. How is the City of Oceanside performing in delivering city services and protecting the quality of life in Oceanside?**

**A.** The City of Oceanside has a long tradition of safe neighborhoods, involved citizens and a vibrant business community. As a full-service city, Oceanside provides the community with such services as police, fire, library, water and sewer. In addition, the City has an airport, a small craft harbor, a municipal pier, golf courses, swimming pools, and numerous parks and community center facilities. Oceanside's beaches are owned by its citizens and the City is responsible for beach services such as lifeguards and beach maintenance. A recent community survey of Oceanside residents showed very high favorability for the quality of life and the quality of city services. Oceanside is dedicated to enhancing and protecting the quality of life for current and future generations.

### **Q. What has Oceanside done to control its costs?**

**A.** Since 2007, the City has taken the following steps to reduce costs:

- Reduced staffing levels
- Restructured employee pension plan to save money and transferred the cost of pensions to employees
- Froze the City portion of health care costs with all increases borne by employees
- Used technology to improve efficiency
- Cost containment
- Eliminated the neighborhood traffic calming program
- Soft hiring freeze
- Contracted out maintenance
- Closed the Landes Community Center



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## **Q. What is the City proposing to address its financial needs?**

**A.** Over the past year, the City has reviewed several options to protect our essential city services, including grants and several local funding options. Oceanside City Council is considering a potential sales tax measure, on the November 6, 2018, ballot. If approved by local voters, the measure would enact a ½ cent increase in our local sales tax, which would be paid by everyone who shops in Oceanside including tourists and visitors. Groceries and medicine would be exempt from the sales tax.

## **Q. How would a potential ballot measure maintain local city services?**

**A.** The potential measure would provide stability to the City's budget and add over \$11.2 million per year to protect and enhance the quality of services to the community. It could:

- Ensure that we have enough police officers to respond quickly to 9-1-1 emergencies and reduce gang activity and drug-related crime
- Ensure that we have enough firefighter/paramedics and lifeguards to respond quickly to 9-1-1 emergencies
- Repair potholes and maintain local streets
- Keep public areas clean and free of graffiti
- Provide fire protection, lifeguard and emergency medical services
- Repair, maintain and enhance public infrastructure including sidewalks, storm drains and other infrastructure improvements

## **Q. How do we know funds would be spent wisely?**

**A.** By law, all funds would stay here in Oceanside and could not be taken by the State. An independent citizens' oversight committee and annual audits would verify that all funds are spent on voter-approved priorities.

## **Q. How have state budget cuts impacted the City and its emergency services?**

**A.** Oceanside does not receive state funding for public safety. We simply cannot rely on the State to provide critical funding for our local city services.

## **Q. Could the State cut or take away this local funding?**

**A.** No. All funds would be legally required to be spent in Oceanside, ensuring that all funds are used locally, with no money could be taken by the State.

## **Q. How much would the measure cost?**

**A.** This measure would enact a ½ cent increase in our local sales tax. For example, the measure would add 50¢ to a \$100 purchase or \$5.00 on a \$1,000 purchase. Groceries and medicine are exempted from sales tax. Significant portions of our local sales taxes are paid by visitors and residents from other cities who shop in our community.



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**Q. How is this different from existing sales taxes?**

**A.** The current sales and use tax rate in Oceanside is 7.75%. The City only receives 1% of that revenue and the rest goes to the State, San Diego County and SANDAG. If approved, a sales and use tax would go entirely to the City.

**Q. When was the last time local taxes were increased for the City of Oceanside?**

**A.** In its 130-year history, the City has never asked voters to consider a local sales tax increase. The transient occupancy (hotel/motel) tax rate was increased from 9% to 10% in 1993. Voter approval is required for any increase in the rate.

**Q. Where would this new tax place the Oceanside’s sales tax rate compared to other cities?**

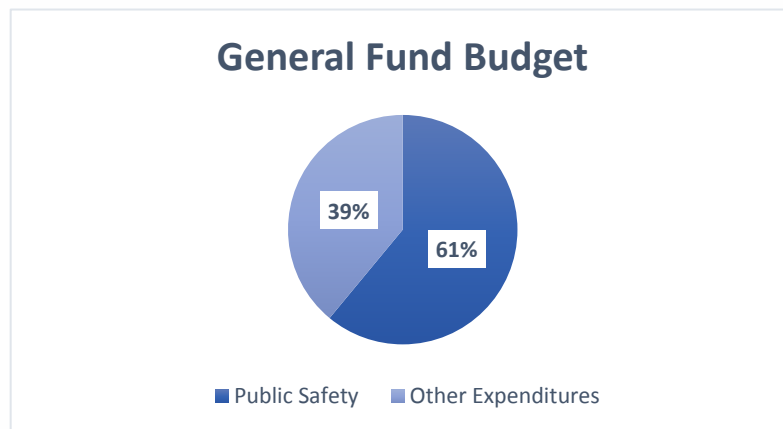
**A.** The average sales tax rate in California is 8.5% as of July 1, 2017. If approved by voters, Oceanside’s new 8.25% rate would be less than the average of other California cities. Rates in other area cities include Del Mar, National City and Temecula at 8.75%; La Mesa at 8.5%; and Chula Vista, El Cajon and Vista at 8.25%. Other Coastal cities with local taxes include Long Beach (10.25%), Santa Monica (10.25%), Avalon (10.0%) and Santa Barbara (8.75% effective April 2018).

**Q. How long would the potential measure be in effect?**

**A.** The potential measure would have a duration of seven years and could not be renewed without voter approval.

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

**A.** To sustain our high quality of life, the City of Oceanside has a balanced general fund budget of \$145.24 million. The largest expenditure category is public safety (police, fire and lifeguards), with 61% of the budget.





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**Q. What are the next steps for the potential measure?**

**A.** The deadline to place a measure on the November 6, 2018 ballot is August 10, 2018 and requires approval by 2/3rd of the City Council (four affirmative votes). We expect to bring an item to the City Council in June 2018 to place on the November ballot.

**Q. How do I get more information?**

**A.** We care about your input in the process of determining priorities for our city. Please email the City at [info@oceanside.ca.us](mailto:info@oceanside.ca.us) with any questions or comments.