How to Overcome Obstacles to Passing Your Sales Tax Measure

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Measure P:
To Renew or Not to Renew?

League of California Cities
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Who is Fairfield?

- 57th largest city in the state
- Fabulous location
- Thriving community
- Diverse community
- Dynamic employer base

Measure P Sales and Use Tax

- New revenue desperately needed to advert a fiscal crisis
- First ever city tax adopted in 2012
- Key features
  - Limited term
  - General tax
  - Local oversight
- Passed with more than 2/3rds support
Delivering and Marketing Results

- Expanded police department to address critical needs
- Established medical response unit
- Reinvested in local streets and roads
- Addressed quality of life concerns

General Fund Revenue by Category

Fiscal Year 2018-19
Total $97.7 million

- Property Taxes 22%
- Sales Tax 22%
- Measure P Taxes 20%
- Utility / Franchise Taxes 9%
- Vehicle / Other Taxes 15%
- Other 12%
Measure P: Renew or Not to Renew?

To renew expiring funding without increasing tax rates, shall the Ordinance be adopted extending the existing 1% sales tax on an ongoing basis to preserve $16 million dollars in local annual funding for the City of Fairfield that the state cannot take away, with mandatory audits and independent oversight, to support neighborhood police patrols, firefighting and rapid 9-1-1 emergency response, crime prevention programs, fixing potholes and repairing neighborhood streets, parks and recreation, and other general services?
Keys to Success

- Employee buy-in
- Involved community leadership
- Robust city marketing/branding
- Dynamic private campaign
- Trusted Management
- Transparency

Robust City Sponsored Marketing /Branding

Community Publications

Street Signs

Videos
Dynamic Private Campaign

- Widespread community involvement
- Community mailers
- Weekend walking
- Phone banking
- Letters to the Editor
- Social media

Managing Controversy

254-home project has some Fairfield residents seeing red

By Ryan McCarthy

FAIRFIELD — Rockville Springs, a 254-unit residential subdivision on 39 acres near Interstate 80, has some residents seeing red about the development they say takes away land for needed retail businesses and well-worn trails.

"It’s substandard," resident Nika Brenn said Wednesday. "It’s right along the freeway."

Fairfield City Planning Commission

28 commission meeting about keeping commercial property in the

Top 10 Stories of 2016: $710,000 payment by Fairfield for HUD error spurs controversy

By Ryan McCarthy

FAIRFIELD — The public uproar of the HUD saga can be erased by the city’s decision to pay $710,000 to settle whistleblower’s lawsuit — while the end of the story may be as far off as 2018.

Mraz opposes Measure P

sales tax extension on Nov. 8 ballot

By Ryan McCarthy

FAIRFIELD — John Mraz, who worked to pass the one-cent sales tax voters approved in 2012 when he served on the City Council, said Wednesday he opposes Measure P on the Nov. 8 ballot to extend the tax.
City of Chula Vista

- 14th largest in California
- 2nd largest in San Diego County
- Current population 268,000 projected to grow to 316,467 by 2040
- 52 square miles
- 7 miles south of Downtown San Diego
- 7 miles from the Mexican Border
Initial Attempts

• May 2009
  o Proposition A – One-cent sales tax
    • No - 67.5%

• November 2010
  o Proposition H – Telecommunications User Tax
    • No – 56.3%

Challenges
Significant Budget Cuts

- Committed funds for an inventory and assessment of the condition of our overall infrastructure.
- Hired asset management consultants and established the Asset Management Program Advisory Committee (AMPAC) in 2014.
- Develop a consistent and clear methodology for assessing and documenting the condition of the City's infrastructure.
A Systems Approach

### Asset Management Systems

- Buildings
- Drainage
- Fleet
- General Government
- Open Space
- Parks
- Roadway
- Urban Forest
- Wastewater

Making the Case

- Existing finances not sufficient to maintain vital assets
- Deferred maintenance & replacement
- Lowest number of City employees per capita in region
- Reallocate resources
- Pension reform
- Seek new economic investments and steadily rebuild General Fund
- Solicit broad-based citizen input
Road to Recovery

No sale: Chula Vista voters reject tax increase

Chula Vista leaders, employees to pay into retirement

Building the Team

• AMPAC
• Multi-departmental City team
• TBWB – strategy and communications firm
  • True North Research – survey research firm
Taking it to the Streets

• Simple, summary materials
  • Informational flyer
  • FAQ
  • Web page
• Resident engagement and feedback
  • Mailer with tear-off reply card
  • Online survey form
  • Link to existing City communications
• Public Opinion Survey

Public Input

- City streets and potholes: 23%
- Repair failing storm drains: 36%
- Sidewalks, curbs and gutters: 36%
- Emergency equipment and facilities: 36%
- Retrofit storm drains to reduce water pollution: 34%
- Water recycling and irrigation systems: 34%
- Wildfire response and prevention: 30%
- Parks and recreation facilities: 40%
- Library and recreation centers: 62%

High
Medium
Intended Expenditure Plan

Ballot Question and Results
November 8, 2016

“To repair neighborhood streets and sidewalks, replace storm drains to prevent sinkholes, update police, paramedic and 9-1-1 equipment and facilities, improve parks, repair recreation facilities, and for general city services and infrastructure, shall the City of Chula Vista adopt an ordinance enacting a temporary ½ cent sales tax, generating an estimated $16 million per year, expiring in 10 years, with no further increases without voter approval, with all funds staying in Chula Vista, requiring citizen oversight and independent audits?”

(68% of Chula Vista voters supported Measure P)
Where We are Today

Estimated $178 million will:
• Improve local streets and sidewalks
• Replace aging police and firefighting vehicles, equipment and technology
• Replace storm and sewer pipes before they collapse
• Renovate and/or repair park amenities, courts, fields, libraries and recreation centers

Delivering on the Promise
Oversight and Accountability

- 16-member Citizens Oversight Committee established
- Initially met monthly now quarterly
- First year successful in setting up process and reporting out
- Compliance with Expenditure Plan
- Continuing to work on communicating progress on various projects

What We Did Right

- Independent confirmation of need
- Created open and transparent process
- Involved all departments
- Built a core team
- We were prepared to step back if necessary
Measure A – June 5, 2018

- Measure A – permanent ½ cent sales tax
- General Tax
- Public Safety Expenditure Plan
- Passed with 53% percent
- Measure A Expenditure Plan

If at First You Don’t Succeed
Framing the Need: What Works

• How you frame your needs will impact overall support
• Even in conservative areas, local tax measures will pass if the measure is framed in the right way
• Don’t blame outside factors for your budget challenges
• Don’t scare voters into supporting your measure by threatening cuts or loss of services
• Voters respond to responsible management and cost-cutting efforts
Understand Your Community

- Conduct a poll to understand voter support and priorities
- You cannot educate your way out of the challenge
- Instead, understand current voter priorities—your needs will likely align
- Communicate your need and solutions in terms that voters support and understand

Engage Your Community

- Provide information to your public through direct mail, online communication and email blasts
- Seek feedback from voters and community leaders
- Engage your community leaders to help identify challenges and develop solutions—these leaders may become your greatest advocates
Public Information vs Advocacy

- *Salinas v Vargas*
- Importance of transparency
- No clear lines

Recent Issues

**Potential Revenue Source: Cannabis Tax**
- Voters overwhelmingly support these measures
- Less sensitivity to the tax rate
- Don’t overpromise revenue
- Tie to health and safety

**Pensions**
- Major problem facing cities
- Don’t talk about numbers—talk about services
- Get your public safety professionals to be your messengers & emphasize services
Planning Your Measure: Feasibility Study

- Poll
- Election timing
- Tax rate*
- Programs

*Upland* decision

Next Step: Build Consensus

- Inform and engage internal stakeholders
  - Staff
  - User Groups
- Inform and engage external community
  - Elected leaders
  - Business Leaders
  - Ethnic Leaders
  - Neighborhood Leaders
Next Steps: Build a Strong Measure

- Resolution calling election
- Ballot question
- Rate/duration
- Use of funds
- Council Vote

Next Step: Independent Advocacy Campaign

- Privately-funded & volunteer-led
- Lawn signs
- Direct mail
- Endorsements
- Phone banks
- Precinct walks
- Social/Digital strategies
- Remind supporters to vote
- Track votes to win
Questions?