

Frequently Asked Questions

Suisun City's Sales Tax Measure Renewal

Improving Safety and Quality of Life with Local Control

What challenges is Suisun City facing?

Suisun City is facing a severe budget deficit that threatens the future of our city directly impacting the safety and quality of life for local residents. After several years of declining city revenues, and some self-inflicted wounds due to inaction and flawed decisions, we find ourselves in a place that does not allow the city to sustain current operations. Voters in Suisun City approved a 1% sales tax in 2016, which has sustained our limited services. However, this vital sales tax is set to expire soon.

How does a budget deficit impact local services and control?

If Suisun City is unable to secure additional revenue, city leaders will be forced into bankruptcy which will mean immediate and direct reductions in city services, quality of life, and potential safety of the community, additionally, it could lead to the end of Suisun City's status as an independent city. The outcome of losing our independence as a city will negatively impact every resident of our city. This would mean Suisun City would lose its current local fire department, police department, parks, libraries, youth and senior programs among other services. Suisun City would also lose its locally controlled budget and elected City Council for local decision-making.

What impact does the budget have on 9-1-1 emergency response and police patrols?

The current budget shortfall has resulted in police and fire department staffing levels being 30% lower than the standard for a city of Suisun City's size. This inadequacy in staffing makes it challenging to effectively patrol neighborhoods and respond to emergency calls, with some response times reaching as high as 50 minutes, far exceeding the national standard of five minutes. Two-thirds of the fire department's 911 calls are for medical emergencies, requiring the fast response of a paramedic when seconds matter.

How is Suisun City planning to address these challenges?

With our sales tax set to expire, the Suisun City Council is considering placing a measure on the November 2024 ballot to renew locally controlled sales tax funding at a rate of 1.75%. This measure's goal would be to address the budget deficit and maintain our City's essential services and independence.

What would the potential sales tax be spent on?

Funding from a potential renewal and increase to Suisun City's sales tax would be spent on:

- Addressing crime and public nuisances associated with homelessness
- Preventing the elimination of neighborhood police patrols
- Maintaining local fire protection
- Improving 9-1-1 response times
- Maintaining streets and fixing potholes

What are the potential consequences of not securing additional revenue?

Failure to secure additional revenue could force Suisun City into bankruptcy, resulting in immediate and drastic reductions in city services and quality of life. Loss of funding could lead the city to lose its status as an independent city, meaning the end of locally controlled services such as the fire department, police department, parks, libraries, and youth and senior programs.

What types of fiscal accountability would a potential measure include?

Any extended local funding measure would continue to include fiscal accountability requirements, including:

- Public disclosure of all spending
- Independent citizen oversight
- All funds must stay local in Suisun City for local needs
- No funds can be taken away by the State

Are there exemptions for essential purchases in the sales tax measure?

Yes, essential purchases such as groceries, prescription medicine, and diapers would be exempt from the sales tax measure to alleviate any burden on those with fixed or limited incomes. The sales tax would be paid by anyone who shops in Suisun City, including visitors.

How would a sales tax measure affect purchases?

The City is considering a sales tax renewal at the rate of 1.75%. This would add an extra 1.75 cents to a \$100 purchase of taxable goods. Essential purchases like groceries, medicine, diapers, and feminine hygiene products are exempt from sales tax.

Where is the tax collected?

The sales tax is only for Suisun City. The tax would be collected in Suisun City at the point of sale. Visitors, tourists, and residents pay the tax and provide locally controlled revenue to deliver local programs and services that support repairs to City infrastructure, emergency services, crime prevention, youth programs, and improvements to parks and recreation facilities.

How can I learn more or provide feedback on the proposed sales tax measure renewal?

We welcome your feedback and questions as we strive to improve safety and quality of life in Suisun City. For more information or to provide feedback, please contact Bret Prebula, City Manager, at bprebula@suisun.com.