

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL DATE: MAY 10, 2004

FROM: CITY MANAGER

THROUGH: LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE (MAY 4, 2004)

SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY SALES TAX INITIATIVE AS PROPOSED BY SHERIFF LEE BACA OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council adopt a resolution in support of the Los Angeles County Public Safety and Homeland Security Sales Tax Initiative.

BACKGROUND:

Local government budgets are in a state of uncertainty as a result of the State of California's budget crisis. This crisis has had a major impact on all cities as the state continues to take away local funds to balance the state's deficit. Cities throughout California have had to make extensive cuts to existing programs and services, including public safety to compensate.

In order to assist local governments in maintaining a sufficient level of public safety services, Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca has begun collecting signatures for a November 2004 ballot initiative that would raise the sales tax by a half-cent throughout Los Angeles County. If the required signatures are gathered, the initiative will appear on the November 2, 2004 ballot. The measure will require a two-thirds majority to pass.

This proposed countywide sales tax increase would be designated exclusively for Los Angeles County law enforcement. This initiative will provide:

- Additional personnel for law enforcement, local anti-terrorism efforts, homeland security, intelligence gathering, and "first response" capabilities to extraordinary emergencies.
- Communications and specialized equipment for law enforcement personnel throughout Los Angeles County, including independent cities; and support resources required for regional and countywide "Mutual Aid" effectiveness.
- Expansion of inter-agency coordination and standardized training for public safety services.

- Funds to maintain, improve, and expand law enforcement and public safety in the areas of:
 - Emergency and disaster training/preparedness/operations
 - Crime investigations and basic public safety services
 - Expanded role of community oriented policing
 - Local anti-terrorism and intelligence gathering

This initiative would generate approximately \$500 million annually. Five percent of the revenue will be allocated to the Sheriff of Los Angeles County for countywide operations and duties, with the remaining revenue distributed to the municipalities and unincorporated areas within Los Angeles County. As provided for in the California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement (1950) and the California Emergency Services Act (1970), the Sheriff is appointed Coordinator of Mutual Aid for the Los Angeles County operational area.

The minimum allocation will be \$500,000 to each jurisdiction, with the remaining funds equally distributed based on population percentage. Based upon that formula, it is anticipated that Pasadena would receive approximately \$6.6m annually.

The flexibility of this initiative allows the police department to enhance their service to the community in a multitude of ways. Over the past five years, the police department successfully improved services to the city by reducing crime, implementing service area policing, instituting Counter-Terrorism Section, expanding regional policing programs, enhancing career opportunities for civilians, and continuing to explore new technology to fight crime and provide service. Over the next five years, the police department strategic plan calls for implementing values based policing, expanding community policing, improving traffic and transportation issues, increasing awareness and security from acts of terrorism, increasing civilian career development, as well as improving employee training and development, and continuing the pursuit of effective and necessary technology.

While some of these programs are more of a change in policing policy and philosophy, increasing the number of personnel, along with the purchase of equipment to better serve the community will directly impact the department's operating costs. Funds from this initiative can be used for these improvements, as well as offsetting other rising costs associated with public safety. Some of the possible expenditures could be:

- Funding a second Neighborhood Action Team (NAT) – 1 police sergeant and 6 police officers
- Increasing the number of park specialists to enhance safety in our parks – 1 police sergeant and 6 civilian park specialists
- Adding 10 additional traffic officers (including expanding photo red light program)
- Adding an additional officer to the Counter Terrorism Section

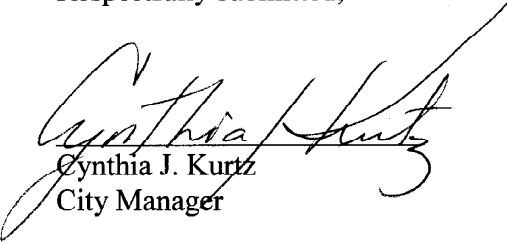
- Adding a computer support technician to assist in maintaining the department's computer infrastructure
- Additional radar units in all patrol vehicles
- Transitioning to a new Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Record Management System (RMS)
- Transitioning to all digital technology

It is clear that in light of today's fiscal uncertainty, as well as social uncertainty related to terrorism, additional funding from this initiative will go a long way to ensuring that the level of service from the police department will keep up with the growing needs of the community and the changing social and technological times ahead.

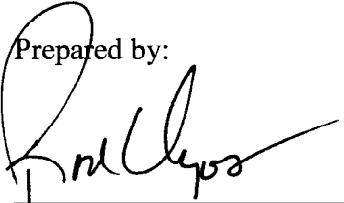
FISCAL IMPACT

There is no immediate fiscal impact resulting from the approval of this recommendation. Should the initiative ultimately be accepted by the voters, it is estimated that general fund revenues to support law enforcement activities would be increased by approximately \$6.6m.

Respectfully submitted,


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