



Agenda Report

August 3, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: **ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS RELATED TO CALLING A GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION CONSOLIDATED WITH THE STATEWIDE GENERAL ELECTION ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2026, FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUBMITTING TO THE VOTERS OF THE CITY OF PASADENA AN ORDINANCE ADDING CHAPTER 4.110 TO TITLE 4 OF THE PASADENA MUNICIPAL CODE, ESTABLISHING THE PASADENA FIRE, WILDFIRE, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PARCEL TAX, SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF TWO-THIRDS OF THE VOTES CAST BY VOTERS VOTING ON THE PROPOSAL WITHIN THE CITY**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 21065 of CEQA and within the meaning of State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4);
2. Adopt a resolution of the City Council of the City of Pasadena requesting the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles approve the consolidation of the November 3, 2026 Pasadena General Municipal Election with the Statewide General Election for the purpose of submitting to the voters of the City of Pasadena an ordinance adding Chapter 4.110 (Pasadena Fire, Wildfire, Emergency Preparedness and Response Parcel Tax), subject to the approval of two-thirds of the votes cast by voters voting on the proposal within the City of Pasadena (Exhibit A to the resolution); and direct the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk to administer said election on behalf of the City of Pasadena; and
3. Adopt a resolution of the City Council of the City of Pasadena setting priorities for filing written arguments pertaining to City of Pasadena 911 Firefighter/Paramedic Emergency Medical/Wildfire Preparedness/Response Measure; and directing the City Attorney to prepare an impartial analysis;

4. Adopt a resolution of the City Council of the City of Pasadena providing for the filing of rebuttal arguments with respect to the City of Pasadena 911 Firefighter/Paramedic Emergency Medical/Wildfire Preparedness/Response Measure.

BACKGROUND:

The Pasadena Fire Department has provided essential fire protection, paramedic care, rescue operations, wildfire mitigation, and emergency response services to the Pasadena community for more than 135 years. Today, rising wildfire risk, increasing climate driven emergencies, and growing service demands require a strengthened and modernized emergency response system. The Fire Department must maintain the ability to respond effectively to wildfires, earthquakes, major storms, and other emergency events that threaten life and property. As wildfire behavior becomes more unpredictable and intense, Pasadena's emergency response system must be equipped with modern communication systems, reliable alerting technology, and year-round wildfire mitigation tools and programs.

Emergency medical service (EMS) calls now comprise the majority of the Fire Department's responses. Maintaining fast and dependable paramedic and 911 service requires upgraded lifesaving equipment, modernized facilities, and sufficient staffing to support an increasing volume of emergency medical incidents. Enhanced EMS capability is foundational to protecting public health and safety citywide.

Wildfire protection is a growing priority for the city. Expanded brush clearance, fuel reduction work, and vegetation management are increasingly necessary to reduce ignition potential and slow the spread of fire. The Department requires additional resources to strengthen wildfire readiness, including expanded brush inspection and clearance programs, upgraded firefighting equipment, and increased training and staffing to support wildfire mitigation efforts. Strengthening fire alert and communication systems is also necessary to ensure timely warnings, coordinated evacuations, and rapid deployment of personnel during wildfire and other major emergencies.

Pasadena's fire stations play a critical role in emergency preparedness, yet many facilities are decades old and require significant upgrades or full replacement. Aging stations limit operational capacity and hinder the Department's ability to stage equipment, support staffing, and meet current standards for emergency readiness. Modernizing these facilities is important to ensure that Pasadena's emergency response infrastructure remains resilient before, during, and after major incidents. Other capital improvements are needed to replace facilities and purchase equipment supporting the service needs. With these investments Pasadena's Fire Department will continue to deliver the essential protection, emergency medical care, and disaster response services that safeguard the community.

The Fire Department's 2026–2036 Strategic Plan outlines essential priorities such as modernizing fire stations, reconstructing Stations 33 and 37, establishing a dedicated

training center and Fire headquarters, upgrading the City's 911 communication systems, and expanding emergency response staffing and equipment. Additionally, the Plan emphasizes the need for increased wildfire resilience through expanded brush clearance program, enhanced paramedic capability, and strengthened citywide emergency operations. Importantly, the Plan also details the funding requirements for these infrastructure and operational improvements, which directly informed the development of the proposed measure.

Recent fiscal years have shown that the City's General Fund is insufficient to meet long term emergency response and wildfire preparedness needs. The City has relied on one-time revenues and reserves to balance the budget, while ongoing demands for fire and EMS services continue to outpace available funding. A dedicated, locally controlled revenue source is needed to ensure the Fire Department can meet growing emergency service requirements, expand wildfire mitigation programs, replace aging equipment, maintain modern communications systems, and provide the level of emergency protection expected by Pasadena residents.

To address these needs, the proposed measure would establish a special parcel tax dedicated exclusively to wildfire protection, emergency preparedness, fire service enhancements, paramedic response, brush clearance, disaster readiness, and essential capital improvements for emergency response facilities and equipment. Funds generated by the measure would be deposited into a special fund and restricted for voter authorized purposes only. Annual independent financial audits and public disclosure requirements would ensure transparency, accountability, and public oversight.

In developing the proposed parcel tax, staff conducted a comprehensive financial analysis to evaluate two primary funding strategies: long-term borrowing, which enables the delivery of expanded services and capital projects within the first ten years, and a pay-as-you-go approach, which funds improvements as revenues accumulate over time. Each approach presents distinct trade-offs. Long-term borrowing accelerates implementation of critical enhancements, while pay-as-you-go prioritizes financial sustainability by avoiding early debt obligations. The selection of a funding model directly influences the pace at which new services can be introduced and the long-term stability of funding.

Staff further considered whether to recommend a higher parcel tax rate, inclusive of inflation adjustments, to support early borrowing and expedited project delivery, or a lower rate without inflation, relying on gradual revenue collection to fund improvements over time. To minimize the financial impact on property owners, staff recommends adopting a lower parcel tax rate that is sufficient to meet planned service needs. While some financial assumptions may require adjustment in future years, any changes would be made to ensure that Pasadena's fire and emergency services remain strong, reliable, and sustainable over the long term.

Based on the priorities and funding requirements outlined in the Fire Department's 2026–2036 Strategic Plan, staff proposes a parcel tax that levies 19 cents per square foot of improved property. This rate is expected to generate approximately \$22.1 million in annual revenue, which aligns with the projected costs necessary to modernize fire stations, upgrade emergency communication systems, expand wildfire mitigation programs, enhance paramedic services, and support other critical capital improvements identified in the Plan. By structuring the parcel tax to meet these specific operational and infrastructure needs, the City ensures that the funding mechanism is both targeted and sufficient to deliver the service enhancements and resilience measures required for Pasadena's emergency response system.

With these considerations in mind, the proposed parcel tax measure represents a comprehensive solution to address Pasadena's emergency response and wildfire preparedness needs, ensuring sustainable funding and robust oversight.

On July 13, 2026, following a presentation from City staff regarding the proposed Wildfire, Emergency Preparedness and Response Measure, the City Council formally directed staff to prepare the necessary resolutions to place the measure on the November 3, 2026 General Municipal Election ballot.

Proposed Ballot Measure Language

Following, is the full text of the City of Pasadena 911 Firefighter/Paramedic Emergency Medical/Wildfire Preparedness/Response Measure question:

City of Pasadena 911 Firefighter/Paramedic Emergency Medical/Wildfire Preparedness/Response Measure. To help maintain fire, paramedic, 911 response; prepare for/ respond to wildfires/earthquakes/medical emergencies; recruit/retain well-trained firefighters; maintain lifesaving equipment/fire alert communication; shall City of Pasadena's measure annually levy 19¢ per square foot of improved property, with low-income senior exemption, providing approximately \$22,100,000 annually until ended by voters, requiring accountability, independent audits, oversight, public spending disclosure; all funds must be used to support local fire protection/emergency medical response services, be adopted?	YES	
	NO	

Adoption of Resolutions

Adoption of the three resolutions will accomplish the following: (1) formally call the City of Pasadena General Municipal Election for the submission of City of Pasadena 911 Firefighter/Paramedic Emergency Medical/Wildfire Preparedness/Response Measure to City voters; request the Board of Supervisors to order the consolidation of the Pasadena General Municipal Election with the Statewide General Election on Tuesday, November 3, 2026; and direct the Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters to conduct the election

on behalf of the City; (2) set priority order for the filing of written arguments for the measure, and direct the City Attorney to prepare an impartial analysis; and (3) authorize the filing of rebuttal arguments.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The proposed measure furthers the City Council's strategic planning goals to maintain fiscal responsibility and stability, and to support and promote quality of life for all patrons.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4) excludes “government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities” from its definition of “project” when they “do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.” On its own, voter approval of the proposed measure will not “commit” the City to activities that have a physical change in the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total cost for submitting the City ballot measure (City of Pasadena 911 Firefighter/Paramedic Emergency Medical/Wildfire Preparedness/Response Measure) to voters as part of the November 2026 Statewide General Election is estimated to cost approximately \$436,660. The following chart provides a breakdown of these projected election expenses.

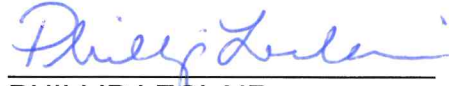
CITY OF PASADENA 2026 November General Election

CITY OF PASADENA - At Large

<i>Voter Count</i>	<i>Rate Breakdown</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>
Registered Voters (RV)	91,999	
<i>Election Operations (rate * RV)</i>	$\$2.7201 * 91999$	\$250,246.48
<i>Vote By Mail Processing (rate * RV)</i>	$\$0.8878 * 91999$	\$81,676.71
<i>Sample Ballot Processing and Printing</i>		
Office(s)/Seat(s) (rate * No. of Offices * RV)	$\$0.0242 * 0 * 91999$	\$0.00
Measures(s) (rate * No. of Measures * RV)	$\$0.0242 * 1 * 91999$	\$2,226.38
Measure Text (rate * No. of Text Pages for all measures * RV)	$\$0.0725 * 10 * 91999$	\$66,699.28
Voting Information (rate * RV)	$\$0.3761 * 91999$	\$34,600.82
<i>Candidate Filing and Campaign Finance (rate * No. of Candidates)</i>	$\$1843.1509 * 0$	\$0.00
Election Preparation Cost (Flat rate per jurisdiction)		\$1,210.00
CITY OF PASADENA TOTAL ESTIMATE		\$436,659.67

Sufficient funds are available in the City Clerk's Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget, to cover these expenses

Respectfully submitted,



PHILLIP LECLAIR
Acting Assistant City Manager

Approved by:



MATTHEW E. HAWKESWORTH
Interim City Manager

Resolutions:

- Calling and Consolidating Election; and Requesting Election Services from County of Los Angeles (Exhibit A - Pasadena Fire, Wildfire, Emergency Preparedness and Response Parcel Tax Ordinance text, adding Chapter 4.110 - Title 4 of the Pasadena Municipal Code)
- Setting Priorities for Filing Arguments; City Attorney to Prepare Impartial Analysis
- Authorizing the Filing of Rebuttal Arguments