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Community Investment Fund Policy

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT or Hotel Bed Tax) is authorized under State Revenue and Taxation Code Section 7280. TOT is levied in Sonoma County at a rate of 12% - in 2016 voters approved Measure L, increasing TOT from 9% to 12%. This policy allocates TOT to the General Fund, Community Investment, and Measure L. The Board of Supervisors (Board) allocates one-third of the first 9% of TOT funds to the General Fund, and the remaining funds will be allocated per this policy.

In the early hours of October 9, 2017, the County of Sonoma responded to the Sonoma Complex Fires, which burned 173 square miles and destroyed over 7,000 structures, including 5,143 homes. It will take years to recover fully from the devastating fires. As a result, this policy will provide a four-year funding plan to maintain consistent funding for critical services that support the community's recovery efforts.

II. COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

A. Economic Development

1. Economic Development Board – $3,225,000
   Funds support the Economic Development Board in their mission to enable local businesses to maintain or expand their operations, including $125,000 for Creative Sonoma to award to the arts community.

2. Sonoma County Tourism – 1.25 percentage points of the first 9%
   Funds will be allocated based on revenue to Sonoma County Tourism through a contract approved by the Board of Supervisors to support advertising and promotional efforts.

B. Community Grants and District Priorities

1. Local Events, Organizations, District Priorities - $500,000
   Funds will be allocated to events, organizations, and Supervisorial District priorities (see Appendix A for program requirements). The funds available for this category are divided equally among supervisorial districts. Unused funds will be accounted for by Supervisorial District and available for use in future years. Organizations may make their requests annually to each Supervisorial District.

C. Community Services

1. Fire Dispatch Fees - $900,000
   Fire Dispatch Fees for REDCOM services.

2. Fuels Reduction and Landscape Resiliency Campaign - $900,000
   Funding will support the vegetation management program as approved by the Board of Supervisors.

3. District Formation Funds - $175,000
   Rural areas of Sonoma County are experiencing an increased need for municipal services. Funds may be used for professional services to establish Special Districts that will enable communities to provide self-generated funding to address municipal challenges.

4. Regional Parks – $2,650,000
   Funding will support parks operations, maintenance, and improvements.

5. Office of Recovery and Resiliency - $300,000
   Funding will support the Office of Recovery and Resiliency to implement the Board's priorities within the Recovery and Resiliency Framework.

D. Program Administration and Integrity

1. Collections/Audit/Legal – $550,000
   Funding will support County Departments who provide revenue and tax collection services, grantee audit services, and legal advice.

E. Community Investment Fund Balance

1. Allocate any fund balance of the first 9% to General Fund priorities determined annually by the Board of Supervisors during Budget Hearings.

III. MEASURE L

Measure L funds are tracked separately. The categories established for Measure L funding are based on the educational information provided to voters as part of the Measure L campaign. Funding will be distributed based on revenue.

A. Fire Services, 40%

Funding will support enhanced fire protection services as determined by the Board.

B. Road Repair and Improvement, 20%

Funding will support projects included in the Transportation and Public Works Roads Plan adopted by the Board.

C. Affordable Housing, 13%

Funding will support affordable housing projects. The Community Development Commission will recommend funding priorities to the Board during the annual budget process.

D. Tourism Impact Fund, 10%

Funding will be distributed through grants or to County departments to meet the unique and urgent needs of areas within unincorporated Sonoma County. Funds in this category may be used for activities such as safety improvements, environmental impact mitigation, public safety, and other tourism mitigation activities, such as parking enforcement. Funds may be used for projects that benefit the community, or to support organizations that coordinate community improvements, such as the Municipal Advisory Councils.

Funds will be allocated to each Supervisorial District proportionate to the amount of TOT collected by the District in the previous fiscal year. The Board of Supervisors will consider these needs on semi-annual basis. Unused funds in a single fiscal year will be accounted for and available in following years.

E. Event Facilities Improvements, 9%

Funding will support operations, maintenance, and improvements of County owned facilities that enhance recreational activities, including, but not limited to Veterans Halls. The County Administrator's Office will recommend funding priorities to the Board during the annual budget process.

F. Code Enforcement and Compliance, 8%

No more than 8% of Measure L Funds may be used to enhance administration of this Program, including tax collection services, grantee audit services, and code enforcement and operator compliance activities. The County Administrator's Office shall recommend funding within the annual budget process to fund these activities.

Appendix A

Community Grants and District Priorities

POLICY STATEMENT

Per the Community Investment Fund Policy, $500,000 will be allocated annually to events, organizations, and Supervisorial District priorities. The funds available for this category are divided equally among Supervisorial Districts. Unused funds will be accounted for and available for use in future years. Organizations may make their requests annually to each Supervisorial District.

PROGRAM INTENT

The County of Sonoma invites non-profit organizations to apply for grant funding for local events that will support businesses or enhance culture, and organizations that provide a benefit to the community.

The Board of Supervisors (Board) may award funding to County Departments or to Supervisorial Districts to complete priority projects. Funding may be used to cover salary and benefit costs associated with changed or additional staff, and other costs associated with added staffing such as office space.

GUIDELINES

District Supervisors will evaluate applications for Community Grants using the following criteria before bringing awards to the Board for approval.

- Events, organizations, and programs must meet at least one of the following criteria:
    - Enhance the cultural diversity and richness of Sonoma County
    - Provide a benefit to the community, the economy, or the environment
    - Promote Sonoma County and encourage visitors to frequent the County throughout the year
- Events must be held within the County of Sonoma

Applications are open year-round at https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/CAO/Services/Community-Investment-Program/.

Funding for staffing must be related to a Supervisorial District priority which provides a benefit to the community.

- Funding may be used for enhanced or changed staffing such as interns, support staff, or administrative management positions; positions allocated to a Supervisorial District will remain/be at-will
- Standard County processes and timelines must be followed with regard to classification changes, position allocation changes, and budgetary adjustments