



Legislation Text

File #: 2020-0761, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): County Counsel/SCTA

Staff Name and Phone Number: Lauren Walker 565-2421/James Cameron 565-5373

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): All

Title:

Call for Special Election on Sonoma County Transportation Authority Sales Tax

Recommended Action:

Adopt a resolution calling a special election to be consolidated with the November 3, 2020 general election, for voter approval of an ordinance adopted by the Sonoma County Transportation Authority imposing a one-quarter cent retail transactions and use (sales) tax for a period of twenty (20) years for transportation improvements, adopting an expenditure plan for the proceeds of the tax, and authorizing the issuance of bonds to finance projects in the expenditure plan.

Executive Summary:

On July 13, 2020, the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) adopted the Go Sonoma Act for Sonoma County. If approved by voters, the Go Sonoma Act will impose a one-quarter cent (0.25%) retail transactions and use tax for a period of twenty (20) years for transportation improvements; adopt an expenditure plan for the proceeds of the tax; and authorize the issuance of bonds to finance projects in the expenditure plan.

State law requires that your Board call the election on the Go Sonoma Act, and to consolidate the election with the statewide special election on November 3, 2020.

Discussion:

On July 13, 2020, SCTA adopted the Go Sonoma Act for Sonoma County ("Go Sonoma Act"). The Go Sonoma Act will impose a one-quarter cent (0.25%) retail transactions and use tax for a period of twenty (20) years for transportation improvements; adopt an expenditure plan for the proceeds of the tax; and authorize the issuance of bonds to finance projects in the expenditure plan. The Go Sonoma Act will become effective if it is approved by two-thirds of the voters voting on the measure.

New transportation investment is needed in Sonoma County. Without it, we will experience more traffic, increased greenhouse gas emissions and poorly maintained streets that leads to time away from family and friends, bad air quality, increased costs for car maintenance and impacts to climate.

Go Sonoma benefits everyone who lives and works in Sonoma County. Through a public process, SCTA staff have developed a plan to fix local streets, improve transportation corridors, increase bus transit service, and improve safety for cyclists, pedestrians and drivers. Without increasing the current tax rate, more than twice

as much money will be dedicated to local roads, bus service and bike projects and cannot be taken away for any other purposes.

Sonoma became a self-help county in 2004 when it passed the Traffic Relief Act known as Measure M. Having the Go Sonoma Act in place now will enable the county to maintain this status and deliver critical transportation projects. As a self-help county with a reliable revenue source the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) leveraged other funding at a ratio of 5:1 to widen the Highway 101 corridor. With a secure local funding source the SCTA has been able to secure highly competitive State and federal funds that would not have been possible without a local commitment that gets projects shovel ready.

Go Sonoma Act will provide the local funding commitment to SCTA's Comprehensive Transportation Plan referred to as Moving Forward 2050, supporting SCTA's transportation system goals:

1. Connected and Reliable
2. Safe and Well Maintained
3. Community Oriented and Place-Based
4. Zero Emissions

Per state statute, the SCTA directed staff to submit the Go Sonoma Act Expenditure Plan to the county's nine city councils and to your Board for consideration and approval prior to SCTA's final adoption of the plan. The results were as follows:

Cloverdale - 5-0
Cotati - 5-0
Healdsburg - 5-0
Petaluma - 6-1
Rohnert Park - 4-1
Santa Rosa - 7-0
Sebastopol - 5-0
Sonoma - 3-2
Windsor - 2-3
County of Sonoma - 5-0

Locally relevant information about Measure M and Go Sonoma were provided via presentations that are also available at www.scta.ca.gov/gosonoma <<http://www.scta.ca.gov/gosonoma>>. In addition, the following key points were showcased. Advancing the ballot measure in 2020 will allow Sonoma County to:

- Keep our status as a self-help county.
- Keep us eligible for regional, State and federal funds and allows us to leverage those funds. Without it, we won't be competitive.
- Allows us to start on new projects now - this will help with economic recovery and job creation. From inception to completion transportation project take years if not decades to deliver. Planners and engineers need reliable known funding sources to develop and implement projects that will meet our transportation needs.
- Help all modes of transportation.
- Continue the work we have been doing for another 20 years and is not a new tax. We have a proven

track record.

- Cost effectively support transportation - if you spend \$25,000 a year on taxable goods (not groceries, rent, insurance, etc.), this measure will cost you \$62/year or \$5/month.
- These funds cannot be taken away by the State or any other entity. Can only be changed by the voters.

Benefits of the Go Sonoma Act include:

- Provides \$10M each year directly to each city and the County to pave roads.
- More than triples the amount of local funding for bike and pedestrian projects.
- More than doubles the amount of local money going to local bus service.
- Dedicates 3% to first/last mile connections for transit and travel demand programs to get people out of single occupant cars.
- Dedicates 2% to fare free programs for groups like students and seniors. This will serve an immediate benefit and can serve as a match to regional and State programs that will grow the program.
- Identifies priority projects in each city and the County that improve traffic flow and safety. Will help get those projects shovel ready and provide local match to leverage outside funding.
- Urges use of technology to ensure reliability and safety; not just infrastructure fixes.
- Encourages jurisdictions to prioritize climate change fighting projects and help meet State and local GHG requirements.
- SCTA is a transparent organization that includes diverse perspectives on multiple advisory committees.

The Go Sonoma Act requests that your Board call a special election, to be consolidated with the November 3, 2020 general election, for voter approval of the Go Sonoma Act for Sonoma County. The Public Utilities Code requires your Board to call the election upon SCTA's request, and to conduct the election.

The estimated cost of the special election is being developed by County staff at the Registrar of Voters. SCTA is responsible for the cost of the special election, regardless of if the measure is approved or rejected.

Prior Board Actions:

June 9, 2020 - Considered and approved the SCTA Go Sonoma Act for Sonoma County.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			

Total Sources			
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Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Jurisdictions requesting consolidation with the General Election pay a pro-rata share of the costs associated with conducting the election.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

Attachments:

1. Board Resolution
2. Go Sonoma Act (SCTA Ordinance No. 5)

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

1. July 13, 2020 SCTA Staff Report
2. Go Sonoma Act Expenditure Plan