



CITY OF SAN MARINO

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

On November 3, 2015, San Marino voters will go to the polls to vote. Two very important matters on the ballot are the Utility User Tax and the Public Safety Tax. Unlike most cities, San Marino receives a very modest percentage of its general fund revenue from sales tax. The City's primary revenue source is property tax, followed by the Public Safety Tax and the Utility User Tax. These taxes were initiated because the City does not have the commercial base that many other cities have, and these two taxes generate the revenue needed to provide the high level of service the residents and community members of the City currently enjoy. These are not new taxes, but rather existing revenue streams up for renewal that are key to how the City currently operates.

City of San Marino Utility User Tax – Measure U

What is the Utility User Tax (UUT)?

The UUT is a tax on telecommunications, electricity, natural gas, water and video services in San Marino. The tax is paid by the consumer and collected as part of each applicable utility bill.

How Long Has San Marino Had a UUT?

The UUT was first adopted by the City Council in November 1992 and collections began in 1993. In 1996, the UUT was approved by voters for a 10-year period with 67.78% "YES" votes. Voters approved the UUT for another 10-year period in November 1996 by 57.78% "YES" votes. The UUT will expire on March 31, 2017 unless it is approved again by a simple majority.

What are the voters asked to approve at the November 3, 2015 Election?

At the General Municipal Election on November 3, voters will decide:

Shall an ordinance be adopted to update and extend the Utility User Tax for a period of 10 years and reduce the maximum rate of the tax from 6% to 5%?

What can the UUT be Used for?

The UUT is a General tax and is not limited to a specific purpose. It can be used for general City operating expenses and capital improvements, such as police; fire; library; landscape maintenance; and construction of streets, parks and other City facilities.

How have UUT revenues been spent in San Marino?

The UUT has generated approximately \$8.45 million for the City's

General Fund over the past five years. These funds have made possible, in part, a number of capital projects that include low voltage street light conversion; sidewalk repairs, asphalt street resurfacing and restriping; the Lacy Park Playground Rehabilitation Project; and almost \$1 million in slurry-seal street projects.

How much is the UUT projected to generate in Fiscal Year 2015-2016 revenues?

The UUT is estimated to generate \$1.7 million in Fiscal Year 2015-2016. This is 6.7% of the City's 2015-2016 Unrestricted Funds Budget of \$25.7 million.

What will be the financial impact on the City should the UUT fail to pass?

The loss of \$1.726 million would necessitate reductions in operat-

(Continued on page 3)

City of San Marino 2015 Public Safety Tax – Measure SA

What is the Public Safety Tax (PST)?

The PST is a parcel tax that property owners pay on their property tax bill. The money goes to the City for paramedic, fire and police protection. The funds may not be used for any other purpose.

In 2014-2015 Fiscal Year, the parcel tax ranged from \$436 to \$2,487 per parcel. If approved by the voters, the PST will range from \$457 to \$2,611 in Fiscal Year 2016-2017 and may be increased by 5% in the subsequent three years, should the City Council wish to increase it. The City Council has historically increased the tax every other year by 5%. A Senior Citizen Credit of \$100 per parcel is available for parcels owned by senior citizens (65 years or older) whose income does not exceed levels the City Council establishes.

How Long Has San Marino Had a PST?

The PST was first adopted by San Marino voters in 1980 and has been in existence for 35 years. Voters have approved PST measures nine times. The proposed renewal would be for four (4) years and requires a two-thirds “YES” vote for passage.

What are voters asked to approve at the November 3, 2015 Election?

At the General Municipal Election on November 3, voters will decide:

Shall an ordinance be adopted to continue a Special Public Safety Tax for Paramedic Services, Fire Protection and Prevention, and Police Protection in the City of San Marino?

How much is the PST projected to generate in Fiscal Year 2015-2016 revenues?

The PST is expected to generate \$2.9 million in Fiscal Year 2015-2016. This represents 11.3% of the City’s Unrestricted Funds Budget of \$25.7 million.

How much does the San Marino Police Department (SMPD) and San Marino Fire Department (SMFD) receive from the PST?

SMPD receives approximately 59.5% of PST funds and is expected to receive \$1.7 million in 2015-2016. This represents 27.3% of the Police Department’s \$6.3 million budget in 2015-2016.

SMFD receives approximately 40.5% of PST funds and is expected to receive \$1.2 million in 2015-2016. This represents 19.3% of the Fire Department’s \$6.1 million budget in 2015-2016.

How important is the PST to police, fire and paramedic services in San Marino?

The PST is essential to maintain the existing public safety force for the City. This ensures fast response times, crime protection, fire protection and prevention, and the high quality of paramedic medical responses that have saved San Marino lives over the years.

Police Department

The San Marino Police Department (SMPD) is among the most responsive in Los Angeles County. Priority 1 calls for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015 totaled 187, with the Police Department’s average response time being 1 minute and 58 seconds.

SMPD employs a total of 28 full

time sworn officers (one officer for every 476 citizens) and seven full time and several part time civilians. Collectively, these personnel work in partnership with the community and other City staff and provide a full-range of municipal law enforcement services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

How has the Police Department performed?

SMPD has responded to 10,415 calls for service in 2015 through August 15. While the total number of calls is down 4.4% (10,895 through August 15, 2014), there are some disturbing changes within that number of calls.

There have been 44 residential burglaries versus 35 last year (a 25.7% increase) and 11 commercial burglaries (the same as 2014). More disturbing are the 17 aggravated assaults versus only four in 2014. That’s a 325% increase resulting from increased domestic and family violence. There also have been two robberies, four auto thefts and 86 larceny/theft calls.

Lower priority calls through August 30, 2015 include 299 vacation watch calls; 1,662 patrols of different properties including banks, schools, the Mission Business District and the rear of Huntington Drive Business Districts; and 257 suspicious vehicles were checked.

SMPD responds to all calls for service.

Fire Department

The San Marino Fire Department (SMFD) is best known for its traditional roles in fire suppression and emergency medical services. Equally important are its

(Continued on page 3)

City of San Marino 2015 Public Safety Tax

(Continued from page 2)

responsibilities in the areas of fire prevention; life safety inspections, including school inspections and community training programs; and emergency preparedness.

The delivery of paramedic services is an integral part of the Fire Department mission. Approximately 75% of the calls handled by SMFD are for medical aid. While all San Marino firefighters are certified Emergency Medical Technicians, most are also licensed Paramedics, which requires significant additional skill and education. The paramedics provide ambulance service and Advanced Life Support using Standing Field Treatment Protocols (SFTP's). Only about 10% of the cities in Los Angeles County employ paramedics with the extensive training and experience required to use SFTP's.

The SMFD has a staff of 19 full time employees, including 12 Firefighter/Paramedic personnel, three Engineers and three Captains. By special arrangement, San Marino shares fire command staff with South Pasadena and San Gabriel.

SMFD has an average response time to emergency medical aid calls of 3 minutes and 51 seconds. San Marino has "automatic aid response agreements" with 13 other fire departments in the Verdugo system, including South Pasadena, San Gabriel, Alhambra, Pasadena and Arcadia. The 3 minutes and 51 seconds response time compares very favorably with other area fire departments.

If you have a comment, question or idea for the newsletter, please email Community Services Director Sue Cobb at sacobb@cityofsanmarino.org.

How important is response time for medical emergencies? According to the American Heart Association, response time is of particular importance to a cardiac arrest patient. Clinical death (cessation of breathing and cardiac activity) starts to transition into irreversible biological (cellular) death in four to six minutes. The SMFD's response time goal is within that window.

The San Marino response time to Priority 1 fire, medical and service calls from dispatch to on-scene arrival averages 4 minutes and 12 seconds, again according to the Verdugo Annual Report. This average time is well within the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommended response time to a structural fire of 6 to 10 minutes. Response times to locations within San Marino, while not measured separately, would be faster.

What will be the financial impact on the Police and Fire departments should the PST fail to pass?

If the PST were not approved, the City Council (with input from residents) would have to make some very difficult decisions about where cuts would be made to offset the loss of \$2.9 million or 11% of the City's Unrestricted Funds Budget. Efforts could be made to make these cuts in other areas, such as capital projects, streets, sidewalk maintenance, Recreation or the Library, but because of the amount of money involved, some cuts would ultimately have to be made in Public Safety. The Council and community would have to be involved in these decisions because the cuts would be significant. ■

2015 City of San Marino Utility User Tax – Measure U

(Continued from front page)

ing costs and capital projects. This could include changes in support for recreation programs; reducing support for The Old Mill and the Crowell Library; reducing Lacy Park maintenance and landscape maintenance throughout the City; eliminating police personnel; eliminating fire/paramedic personnel; eliminating administrative staff positions; and other reductions in City services to residents. ■

Next Veteran's group meeting planned for November 11

The City's local Veteran's group will meet on Veterans Day, Wednesday, November 11, at 10 a.m. at the San Marino Center. The group will meet for a Presentation of Colors and light refreshments. All are welcome! ■

Next scheduled newsletter

The next newsletter will be a combined Newsletter and Community Services Guide, and will be available on the web site around December 18 and mailed to residents the week after Christmas.

Have a comment about the combined Newsletter/Guide? We would love to hear from you. Please email Sue Cobb at sacobb@cityofsanmarino.org.

City of San Marino

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San Marino Voting Information

- If you are voting by mail, your ballot must be postmarked by Election Day on Tuesday, November 3, 2015. The last day to apply to vote absentee is Tuesday, October 27, 2015.
- Polls are open on Election Day, Tuesday, November 3, 2015, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- For voting or polling place information, or to request a vote-by-mail ballot, contact the Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters at (800) 815-2666 or visit lavote.net. ■

Capture the spirit of the holiday season at this year's Christmas Around the Drive

The San Marino community is invited to attend this year's Christmas Around the Drive event to be held on Friday, December 4 from 5 to 8:30 p.m. The annual event is presented

by the San Marino Chamber of Commerce.

Bring your family and enjoy the lighting of the community Christmas tree. Join Santa Claus at 6 p.m. as he arrives at the Fire Station on Old Engine #1. Board the Trolley for a trip "Around the Drive" and enjoy a variety of refreshments, strolling carolers, a puppeteer, petting zoo, balloon artists, face painting and more.

For more information, please contact the San Marino Chamber of Commerce at (626) 286-1022. ■

Preparing for El Nino

With the expected El Nino that could be coming to Southern California, the San Marino Fire Department offers the following tips to property owners to help with the possibility of above normal rain falls this winter.

Property owners should:

- Have a professional check their roof for leaks and stability issues.
- Gutters and drains should be cleaned and checked for damage.
- Run-off and yard drainage areas should be cleared and maintained for proper water egress.
- Basement water pumps should be tested and ready for automatic drainage.
- Storage areas should be checked to make sure valuables are slightly above any accidental water entry levels.

If sand bags are needed this winter, the public can obtain these at the Recreation Department (parking lot) at 1560 Pasqualito Road. ■

 Save the date! 

**Snow Day returns
on Saturday,
January 30, 2016.**