



Meeting Date: 02-12-08

ACTION	TYPE OF ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved Recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/> Info/Consent
<input type="checkbox"/> Ord. No(s). _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
<input type="checkbox"/> Res. No(s). _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing (Info/consent)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Study Session _____

Prepared By: Martin R. Erickson *MRE* Agenda Item No. 0-1
 Reviewed By: City Manager *MMH* City Attorney *J* Finance *SW* Other _____

DATE: February 1, 2008

TO: City Council

FROM: Edmund F. Sotelo
City Manager
City Manager's Office

SUBJECT: Public Education and Community Outreach Program -- Half-Cent Sales Tax

RECOMMENDATION

That City Council:

1. Authorize the City Manager to develop a plan, schedule and budget for a public education and community outreach program in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 to inform residents about the City's current financial situation and the potential uses of revenue should the City Council determine to include a half-cent sales tax increase measure on the November 4, 2008 general election ballot.
2. Approve a special budget appropriation in the amount of \$150,000 from the general fund operating reserve for the purposes of the public education and community outreach program.

DISCUSSION

On January 15, 2008 Council held a study session to review and consider the results of a revenue ballot measure feasibility survey that concluded a general-purpose sales tax measure of not more than one-half percent in 2008 has a reasonable chance for success and is viable provided it has stringent fiscal accountability provisions. The survey of 400 randomly selected likely voters in Oxnard was conducted by Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates from September 26-30, 2007, and marked a key step in a process that began during the development of the City's 2007-2009 budget process last spring. Council directed the City Manager to return with a proposal for development of an action plan, schedule and budget for proceeding with a public information program to educate residents about the City's current fiscal situation and the enhanced services that could come about if a general purpose half-cent sales tax was levied in City of Oxnard.

It is important to note at the outset that staff's primary motivation for considering a half-cent sales tax is not to "balance the budget". By prudent policy direction from the City Council and management of resources, Oxnard has maintained significant general fund reserves since 2000. Due to increasing

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demands for general City services, such as street maintenance, police and fire services, community recreation, creation of parks and youth programs, the FY 2007-2009 budget included use of general fund reserves to result in essentially a "status quo" budget. City staff's recommendation to Council to consider the possibility of a half-cent general purpose sales tax is based on providing a higher level of municipal services to residents across a broad range of vital issues inherent in what constitutes Oxnard residents "quality of life".

In many respects, the survey is the "crux" of the entire public information program as its results indicate that the public is willing to support a sales tax, and also what the top priorities of residents are.

- When initially queried, 70 percent of voters said they would favor a local ballot measure asking voters to raise the City sales tax by one-half cent "to maintain/improve essential City services". This is well above the 50 percent threshold needed to pass a general funding measure, especially given that 42 percent of voters said they will "definitely vote yes" on such a measure. Eighteen percent said they would oppose the measure, with 12% undecided.
- Similar to voters throughout Southern California, Oxnard voters view gangs, the cost of housing and traffic congestion to be the most serious problems facing the community. Although voters are generally pleased with their quality of life, 75 percent identify "gangs and juvenile violence" to be an extremely or very serious problem in the City. Seventy percent regard "the availability of housing for working class families in Oxnard", and two-thirds (67%) consider "traffic on local streets and roads" to be significant problems.

The survey results will guide the development of the public information program as the program will be built around specific enhancements identified in the budget process and in the survey. Some of the following key issues emerged from the survey:

- Gangs and juvenile violence
- The availability of affordable housing for working class families in Oxnard
- Traffic on local streets and roads
- Graffiti
- Growth and Development
- State budget cuts to City programs and services
- Runoff of toxic chemicals from storm drains that pollutes beaches and marine life
- Not enough police on City streets
- Condition of City streets and sidewalks
- Not enough public parks and open space in Oxnard
- Not enough after school youth and recreation programs

Proposed Program Worksopce:

Based on the experience of other California communities in successfully preparing for revenue ballot measures, we believe that an effective public education and community outreach program requires the assistance of an experienced professional that specializes in this type of work. For this reason, the City Manager recommends contracting with Mike Madrid, Principal of Madrid and Associates, for assistance

in implementing this program. The proposed public education and community outreach program will be comprised of the following key elements:

- **Direct Mail.** Implementing a direct mail program that includes a return card or other mechanism to allow citizens to ask questions, provide input or otherwise comment on the City's proposal. With this approach, questions can be identified early in the process. It is anticipated three to four informational mailers over the next six months will be generated.
- **Earned Media.** Placing informational update stories in local papers, radio and television news, and other media, as well as other communication vehicles such as the City's website and public access channel.
- **Community Outreach Meetings.** Employing an aggressive outreach program to hear directly from residents about their city services and priorities. As part of this program, the 43 neighborhood councils will be identified as initial points of community outreach.
- **Public Opinion Research Update.** At the end of the education program, updating our public opinion research before formally placing the measure on the ballot. Along with evaluating the success of the education program, this will help focus on specific local issues, problems, and opportunities that will need to be addressed for a successful measure.

Agreement with Madrid and Associates

Based on his excellent record of success and effective leadership working with other cities in the past, the City Manager recommends contracting with Mike Madrid for assistance. As detailed in the proposed agreement (Attachment 1), his services include:

- Assistance in developing the polling and tracking instruments
- Analyzing and informing city staff and elected officials on results and messages that can be discerned from the polling data.
- The creation of a Public Information Campaign timeline and plan
- Assistance in developing and editing direct mail and collateral materials
- Providing consulting advice on a regularly scheduled (minimum weekly) basis as it relates to best practices of public information campaigns, the development and realization of strategic goals, and assistance in executing the Public Information Phase of this effort.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The special budget will appropriate \$150,000 from the general fund operating reserve to the sales tax public education project (#081001) to cover the following anticipated expenses:

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TASK

Public Education Program Advisor	\$ 50,000
Voter Data	\$ 5,000
Direct Mail: Postage and printing for four mailers	\$ 70,000
Public Opinion Research Update	\$ 20,000
Contingencies	<u>\$ 5,000</u>
	\$ 150,000

At the present time there is \$19,141,509 in the General Fund Operating Reserve. The reduction of \$150,000 to fund this request will result in a remaining balance of \$18,991,509.

Attachment #1 - Proposal for Public Information Program Outreach Assistance from Madrid and Associates

Attachment #2 - Special Budget Appropriation

Attachment #3 - General Fund Operating Summary



MEMORANDUM

January 25, 2008

TO: Ed Sotelo, City Manager
Karen Burnham, Assistant City Manger
Martin Erickson, Government Relations Director

FROM: Mike Madrid, Madrid and Associates

RE: City of Oxnard – Public Information Campaign

Overview

As the City of Oxnard considers its options related to a possible sales tax increase, it is also considering engaging its community in a public information campaign. Designed to educate and inform the public, this process will entail developing materials, communications strategies, internet based messages and an outreach structure to best involve the citizens of Oxnard in the policy making process and determining a course of action related to a possible sales tax increase.

Given Oxnard's strong history of community outreach and its staff capacity to perform many functions related to an effort like this, the city is well prepared to execute a plan with guidance from an experienced pollster and consultant. This proposal and fee structure will recognize those capacities and rely on government relations, communications, and senior management staff as necessary components of this effort.

Madrid and Associates

Mike Madrid is a public affairs consultant with extensive knowledge of city governments and local campaigns. His clients include The League of California Cities and the California Redevelopment Association. Mike Madrid has been successfully running campaigns at the local, state and national levels for over fifteen years. Since 2000, he has served the League of California Cities as their public affairs director where he advises cities throughout California on the preparation, development and execution of their public information campaigns and ballot measure elections.

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In 2004 Mike Madrid created the California Ballot Measure Training Academy, a training series designed to educate city leaders on successful public information campaigns and elections. In that capacity he has worked closely with pollster John Fairbank of Fairbank, Maslin, Mullin and Associates. Together they have advised dozens of cities on successful strategies during CBMTA trainings.

The scope of services recommended and that can be performed by Mike Madrid include:

- Assistance in developing the polling and tracking instruments
- Analyzing and informing city staff and elected on results and messages that can be discerned from the polling data
- The creation of a Public Information Campaign timeline and plan
- Assistance in developing and editing direct mail and collateral materials
- Providing consulting advice on a regularly scheduled (minimum weekly) basis as it relates to best practices of public information campaigns, the development and realization of strategic goals, and assistance in executing the Public Information phase of this effort.

Specific Elements of Oxnard's Public Information Campaign

"Inreach" - Communications with City Staff

Upon council action in mid-February, it is strongly advised that the city manager communicate to the city employee base about what the city is considering undertaking. This process, which we refer to as "inreach", is important to assuage any concerns, take feedback, as well as inventory any support or concerns being felt among employees. A lot of misinformation can easily spread about city finances, the intentions of city leaders, and the overall state of the cities financial health.

There is a unique opportunity to begin communicating with city employees about the public information campaign, and what we hope to learn and how we intend to proceed. This communication can take shape in any number of ways – an employee wide email, employee newsletters or a special communications distributed through appropriate personnel channels.

Additionally, the city manager should immediately schedule meetings with the leadership of represented employee unions and start an involved dialogue with the union representatives about the city's finances, polling data, and specifics about the campaign about to be embarked upon. At this time, an opportunity to speak with all represented employees of their respective agents should be requested.

A regular meeting time with department heads should begin to introduce the public information campaign and elicit support from various departments. Many departments have extensive communications and outreach programs that will be a natural for us to

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begin communicating to the broader public (i.e. community policing groups like neighborhood watch, parks and recreation programs like little league, etc...)

Again, these communications and meetings should be held as soon after council adoption of a plan as possible.

Collateral Materials

A number of materials will need to be produced with the assistance of appropriate city staff and communications professionals. These materials will help communicate our key messages to both internal (city staff) and external (community groups and the public) audiences. At a minimum we should develop the following materials (*Note – all information and materials should be bi-lingual and culturally relevant as the city staff directs. All recommendations are made with that intent in mind*):

1. **FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) sheet.** This two-three page document should concisely address key questions that the public may have about city finances, tax rates, accountability provisions and related issues. Ideally, we can develop a series of fact sheets specific to constituent concerns. For example, we can ask and answer questions such as “What impact will this have on law enforcement?” for neighborhood watch groups, “What impact will this have on senior programs and recreation facilities?” for seniors groups and park programs. The number of FAQ sheets is limited only by the reach of our community groups. While we must also be mindful about raising expectations for these funds – it is usually advised to be as specific as possible about what this new revenue might mean for the quality of life in Oxnard.
2. **Power point Presentation.** A brief 10-15 minute presentation should be developed for presenters who speak as part of our speakers’ bureau. The power point presentation should provide basic background on how the city is financed, the service challenges it faces, and what a new revenue stream might mean. Different variations should be considered for the Mayor, city manager, and citizen presenters as well as accommodations for issue specific groups (i.e. affordable housing advocates, youth programs, law enforcement, etc.)
3. **Primer on Oxnard City Finances.** This short education piece should be no more than two-three pages and read in laymen’s terms about how the city is financed, the history of state take a ways in the past, and the potential stresses faced in the future.

Timeline

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We should incorporate a week-by-week delineation of activities that will be taking place from mid-February through July. This will provide structure to the campaigns efforts as well as an accountability mechanism for those involved with the effort.

The timeline should include the scheduling and meetings with neighborhood councils, speakers' bureaus, and community groups. It should also seamlessly integrate the direct mail program and any media outreach that will take place.

The following timeline should serve as a starting point for the public information campaign.

Timeline for Public Information Campaign – City of Oxnard

February

- City council authorizes public information campaign
- Internal communications to city employees goes out
- Develop and finalize public information and communications plan
- Develop database of prospective speakers bureau members
- Identify Citizens Advisory Committee members
- Begin weekly city staff and consultant meetings
- Brief department heads on public information campaign
- Identify and target community and neighborhood council groups for presentations
- Begin developing collateral materials (FAQ sheets, power point presentation, primer on city finances)
- Begin developing website
-

March

- Speakers bureau training
- Schedule and initialize town hall meetings at neighborhood councils
- Finalize collateral materials
- Finalize website
- Develop and begin implementing earned media strategy, including meetings with editorial boards
- Convene first meeting of the Citizen Advisory Committee
- Develop and mail first direct mail piece to Oxnard residents (Theme: Explaining the purpose of the public information campaign and include survey response mechanism)
- Develop opinion leader database and issue electronic update
- Begin incorporating messaging into city newsletters
- Continue weekly city staff and consultant meeting

April

- Continue speakers bureau outreach

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ATTACHMENT 1
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- Convene second meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee
- Continue weekly city staff and consultants meeting

May

- Continue speakers bureau outreach
- Convene third meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee
- Continue weekly city staff and consultants meeting
- Develop and deliver second direct mail piece (Theme: City of Oxnard's financial pressures)

June

- Continue speakers bureau outreach
- Convene final meeting of Citizens Advisory Committee
- Continue weekly city staff and consultants meeting
- Develop and Deliver final direct mail piece (Theme: "We've heard you", summarizing results and findings of the public information campaign)
- Conduct tracking poll for feasibility

July

- Finalize city resolution for council
- Plan for city council presentation on public information campaign and
- Finalize voter handbook materials
- City Council acts to place measure on November 2008 ballot of deemed appropriate
- Exact wording of measure, tax rate statement, and full text due to county elections office.
- Measures to county counsel for impartial analysis and ballot label.
- Ballot argument is submitted on behalf of measure

Website and E-Strategy

A dedicated presence on the city website should be established with key messages, downloadable FAQ sheets, city finance information, "contact us" links for citizen input and a schedule of upcoming meetings.

Subscription emails should also be gathered for periodic updates and a broader dissemination of information in later stages of the effort.

Media Outreach

An early meeting with the editorial boards of local daily newspapers should begin shortly after council authorization of a public information campaign. The meeting should include

the Mayor, city manager and appropriate financial authorities to discuss the purpose of the information campaign as well as make the case for a need of additional revenues.

Periodic op-ed pieces and letters to the editor should be incorporated as part of the community outreach meetings and begin shortly after the first meetings take place.

Citizen Advisory Committee

Central to building public support must be the idea that this effort is supported by members of the community. This public information campaign should have the face of residents and not necessarily elected officials – though elected official involvement will be key to building support as well.

To that end, a 5-10 member Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) should be appointed by the city council and tasked with the goal of seeking community feedback, assist in leading the public information campaign and reporting back to the council with its findings after the 5 months period ends with a recommendation.

The CAC should meet monthly, review the progress of the efforts, consider the surveys returned via mail form the first direct mail piece, get reports back from staff on the progress of the speakers bureau and neighborhood council meetings and assess the preliminary and tracking polling as methods for determining the viability of a possible sales tax measure.

Speakers Bureau

Our community effort will include the creation of a broad based speaker's bureau that reflects the diversity of Oxnard residents. This bureau, with appropriate training, will be part of the group that educates the community on the cities finances and the possibilities of enhancing the quality of life with new revenue.

Speakers should be "opinion leaders" in the community and at a minimum we should seek to have recognized leaders in the following communities as part of our bureau:

- Small business owners (Chamber of Commerce)
- Law Enforcement advocates
- Youth group leaders
- Ethnic organizations (Latino, African-American, Asian)
- Environmental organizations
- Affordable housing advocates
- Church organizations
- Park and Recreation program participants
- Senior citizens
- Neighborhood Council leaders
- Labor leaders

Neighborhood Councils and Community Groups

The campaign should seek to schedule as many meetings and presentations as possible during the public information phase. Beginning with the 43 neighborhood councils and expanding to chambers of commerce, rotary groups, labor meetings, PTA meetings and other varied groups, we will have our speaker's bureau members attend and present the materials we develop as part of our information effort.

Direct Mail

A minimum of three direct mail pieces should be incorporated into the public information campaign and follow a theme of seeking the maximum amount of community input as possible.

The mail should follow the following process:

- **Direct mailer #1** : A signed letter of members of the CAC explaining to the people of Oxnard the purpose of the public information campaign, background on Oxnard finances, findings of the survey work and mention of an aggressive community outreach effort. Included in this should be a simple survey requesting community input from an enclosed survey.
- **Direct mailer #2** : A primer on city finances explaining how services are delivered and financed in Oxnard. Topics should be prioritized as we found in the FMMA survey.
- **Direct mailer #3** : "We've heard you!" piece from the CAC outlining how many meetings have been held, results of the mail in surveys and report on the progress of the public information campaign along with a recommendation to proceed with placing the measure on the ballot.

Conclusion

As witnessed by the results of polling work conducted by FMMA, the City of Oxnard is well positioned to successfully enact a sales tax measure in November of 2008. Significant resident support exists as Oxnard grapples with many issues common to growing cities and their residents desire to maintain and improve their quality of life.

With a strong, disciplined, well planned and executed public information campaign, there is a high likelihood of successful passage of this new revenue measure.

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CITY OF OXNARD

REQUEST FOR SPECIAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION

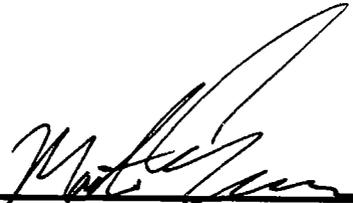
To the City Manager:

February 12, 2008

Request is hereby made for an appropriation of total \$ 150,000

Reason for appropriation: Appropriation for SalesTax Public Education Project.

<u>FUND</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION/ACCOUNT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
General Fund (101)	Reserves and Transfers 101-1002 808-8712- Transfer to Capital Outlay	<u>150,000</u>
	Net Estimated Change To General Fund Operating Reserve	<u><u>(150,000)</u></u>
Capital Outlay (301)	Sales Tax Public Education - 2008 301-1008 (081001) 711-7901 - Transfer from General Fund 826-8209 - Svcs-Other Prof/Contract	 <u>(150,000)</u> <u>150,000</u>
	Net Estimated Change to Capital Outlay Fund Balance	<u><u>-0-</u></u>



Manager

REQUIRES CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE



Director of Finance

Disposition

Transfer by Journal Voucher _____

Approved _____

Rejected _____

City Manager

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CITY OF OXNARD
2007-2008 PROJECTED GENERAL FUND OPERATING RESERVE
ESTIMATED
01/15/2008

	Unreserved	Reserved
Fund Balance June 30, 2007		
Reserved		2,290,735
Unreserved (Unaudited)	19,181,706	
2007-2008 Estimated Revenues & Transfers	115,366,717	
 Est Revenue Adjustments		
Civic Center Renovation (1)	300,000	
Breakers Way (2)	2,775,100	

Net Adjusted Revenues	3,075,100	
	118,441,817	
 2007-2008 Appropriations		
<i>Appropriations from Fund Balance</i>	(115,366,717)	
 Appropriation Adjustments		
Civic Center Renovation (1)	(340,197)	
Breakers Way (2)	(2,775,100)	

Net Adjusted 2007-2008 Appropriations	(3,115,297)	
	(118,482,014)	
Net Change to Operating Reserve	(40,197)	
 Estimated Operating Reserve 6-30-2008	19,141,509	2,290,735

(1) Council Action 10/23/07
(2) Council Action 11/06/07

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