
Impartial Analysis of Measure B

California law permits the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) to impose a retail transactions and use tax (commonly called a "sales tax") in the territory of the VTA, which includes both the unincorporated territory and all the cities within Santa Clara County. Such a tax must first be approved by two-thirds of the voters voting in an election.

Measure B was placed on the Ballot by the VTA Board of Directors (Board). Measure B proposes enactment of a .5% (one-half cent) sales tax. The Board anticipates that the sales tax would be operative on April 1, 2017. The authority to levy the sales tax will expire thirty years later.

Under California law, all local governments within each county cannot enact a total sales tax rate of more than 2% in any territory. Approval of this Measure would result in the territory within the cities of Campbell and San José reaching that 2% cap during 2017 and until the expiration of an existing tax. The State also imposes a sales tax, some of which is distributed to local governments. The State sales tax rate is scheduled to be 7.25% as of January 1, 2017. Approval of this Measure is anticipated to result in a total 9.25% sales tax in the cities of Campbell and San José, and a 9.0% sales tax elsewhere in Santa Clara County, as of the date the sales tax is anticipated to begin. Because existing sales taxes may expire, or other sales taxes may be enacted, overall tax rates may vary during the thirty-year period of this tax.

State law requires the VTA to state the specific purposes for which the sales tax proceeds will be used, and the VTA must spend the proceeds of the tax only for these purposes. The stated purposes of the proposed sales tax are to: repair potholes and fix local streets; finish the BART extension through downtown San José and to Santa Clara; improve bicycle and pedestrian safety; increase Caltrain capacity, in order to ease highway congestion, and improve safety at crossings; relieve traffic on the expressways and key highway interchanges; and enhance transit for seniors, students, low-income, and disabled individuals. The Measure states that the VTA will establish a program and develop program guidelines to administer tax revenues received from the measure.

Measure B provides for the establishment of an independent citizens' oversight committee for ensuring that proceeds of the tax are expended consistent with the program established by the VTA. The committee would hold public hearings, issue reports on at least an annual basis, and arrange for an annual independent audit of expenditures.

A "yes" vote is a vote to authorize a special sales tax of one-half cent (.5%) operative for 30 years, expected to expire on March 31, 2047.

A "no" vote is a vote not to authorize the special sales tax.

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FILED

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REGISTRAR OF VOTERS
COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

By  Deputy