



# Pathfinder

"You and I possess within ourselves – at every moment of our lives, under all circumstances, the power to transform the quality of our lives. Knowing that is what the work is all about."

- Werner Erhard

## Teamwork Matters

A message from  
the City Manager



JASON STILWELL

**The City Council has been maintaining services and funding the City jobs who provide these services in the face of growing costs that exceed available revenue. The City has been using savings set aside for a rainy day to hold the line - with the belief that the community wants these services our employees provide and will vote to fund them in November's election.**

A large and growing part of City services to keep our neighborhoods safe are being supported with one-time City reserves and savings. Most of these services are provided by City employees and these services – and more - will be maintained and enhanced – if Measure U2018 is enacted by voters in November's election. If the measure fails to receive voter passage, the budget calls for very significant operational reductions.

All of Santa Maria benefits from the City Council's decision to delay reductions that were identified by Departments to meet budget-balancing targets, and the Council's decision to fund them with one-time monies.

Measure U2012, presently a quarter cent local sales tax, pays for 15 positions in the Police Department staff (one Commander, five sergeants, seven officers, one crime analyst, one dispatcher); operational costs associated with Fire Station No. 5 (nine firefighters), one Battalion Chief and one Emergency Services Specialist; plus eight hours per week at the Public Library, one City Ranger, one Code Compliance Officer, and two employees to aid in graffiti abatement, among other programs.

Measure U2018, if enacted by voters, will extend and enhance the local sales tax at the one cent rate. If approved, that will provide about \$18 million every year for Santa Maria priorities. The vast majority of the proceeds from this proposed measure would be spent on public safety services. The City Council in July decided 90 percent would be invested for public safety; 5 percent for youth services and programs; and 5 percent or more for quality of life services. The City Council will decide the expenditures in the annual budget process. The goal is to maintain and enhance services.

Measure U2018 builds upon Measure U2012 in two overall areas: support for youth and enhancing the City's quality of life. Also, Measure U2018 would provide resources for a wider array of public safety services such as non-sworn staff, vehicles, and equipment. Among some ideas, the Fire Department is considering a new two person unit to serve medical calls downtown, and the Police Department is considering increased traffic enforcement, for starters.

What is the City's situation, and what would happen without Measure U2018? The City is in its 10<sup>th</sup> year of a structural budget deficit - now at \$8.5 million for 2018-19 - despite years of conservative budgets, operational reductions, and pension reform, and the gap is projected to widen in future years. Without the successful passage of this measure, the City will have to continue to further reduce staffing and programs across departments, degrading service levels and public safety standards while demand for service is ever-increasing. Measure U has been an important and successful financial source for City services for six years. We soon will know if the community votes to continue its support.

*Jason*