



Legislation Text

File #: 19-156, **Version:** 1

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SUBJECT: Report - Discussion and Timelines for Placing Charter Amendments and Ballot Measures on 2020 Elections

REPORT IN BRIEF

Considers placing Charter Amendments and different Ballot Measures on elections scheduled for 2020.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide staff with direction on placing Charter Amendments and/or ballot measures on either the March or November 2020 elections.

AUTHORITY

City of Merced Charter - Section 200 and Article X. - Elections

DISCUSSION

At the March 18, 2019 Council Meeting, at Mayor Murphy's request, Council directed staff to research timelines and process for placing potential Charter Amendments on the March 2020 Primary Election. In addition to the 2020 Primary, the City Council may be asked to place potential ballot measures on the November 3, 2020 General Election to help in funding the construction and renovation of several buildings throughout the City. In addition to capital needs throughout the City, the City Council could also consider the extension of Measure C, a general fund ½ cent sales tax measure that is scheduled to sunset in 2026.

Charter Amendment

The most recent Charter Amendments went to a vote of the people in 2013 (odd to even election years) and 2014 (District based elections). The last comprehensive review of the Charter that included a Council Appointed Charter Review Committee was in 2007. The process at that time included Council appointment of the committee, time for the committee to review and report their findings to the Council and ultimately having the Council put three measures on the ballot to amend the Charter. The entire process took approximately 8 months to complete.

Based on the deadline calendar provided by the Registrar of Voters (attached) for the March 3, 2020 Primary Election, that leaves approximately 5 months to complete the same process. The deadline to submit ballot measures for the March election is September 20, 2019. A list of milestones that must be met in order to make the deadline has been created and attached. Failure to make any of the milestones would seriously jeopardize the placement of any measures on the March ballot.

Public Facilities Bond Measure

In 2017, staff received direction from the City Council to evaluate the feasibility of moving a Facilities Bond Measure forward. These efforts included securing professional services to develop an education strategy and conduct a public option survey to determine if the community would support a ballot initiative. The initial focus was to fund a new Police Headquarters, two new Fire Stations, and the expansion of the Corporation Yard and the remodeling of ten existing restrooms within City of Merced Parks. Staff continued education and outreach efforts through the spring of 2018, with a second survey conducted in June in 2018. Based on the results of the second survey, Council decided to postpone any efforts to place a measure on the ballot until after a needs assessment of the current Police Station could be completed. The needs assessment is currently underway and will produce a more refined cost estimate for the construction cost of a new Police Headquarters. The survey results that are currently posted to the City's website have been included as background information for the Council's consideration.

Measure C - Sales Tax Measure

In November 2005, the voters of the City of Merced passed Measure C, a ½ Transaction (Sales and Use) Tax that would be in effect from April 1, 2006 through March 31, 2016. Funds generated by Measure C have been used to fund police, fire, streets services and projects. Measure C generates approximately \$6.5 million annually and supports a total of 33.79 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, 20.99 FTE for Police and 12.80 FTE for Fire. Included in the adoption of Measure C was an Oversight Committee that reviews the expenditures and proposed budget to ensure fiscal compliance with the commitments approved by voters. The most recent Measure C presentation provided to the Oversight Committee and the Measure C Ordinance that was adopted to add the measure to the ballot has been included as an attachment for Council's consideration.

IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

The City sponsored Measure Y on the June 2018 Primary Election cost the City \$10,879 with similar numbers expected for future measures.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Registrar of Voters March 3, 2020 Election Calendar
2. Milestones to Meet March Election Deadlines
3. Public Opinion Survey Results
4. Measure C Ordinance
5. Measure C Revenue and Expense Report
6. Measure C Slides