

DRAFT

Summary of Public Input Regarding a Possible Pima County Sales Tax

I. Background

On August 1, 2017, the Pima County Board of Supervisors approved a plan to solicit input from the community with regard to whether the Board should adopt a sales tax to fund road repair and/or property tax relief. Central to the plan was the creation of the Sales Tax Advisory Committee, which was tasked with holding public meetings across the County to receive input from the public and other interested stakeholders, in order to provide recommendations on the following:

Should Pima County adopt a half-cent general sales tax? If so,
Should revenues from the tax be used to fund road repair and/or reduce property taxes?
Should the tax be permanent or temporary?

A number of outreach methods were used to solicit public input for the Committee's and ultimately the Board's consideration. This report summarizes these methods and the public input that was received. This report was reviewed and approved by the Pima County Sales Tax Advisory Committee on _____, 2018.

II. Outreach Methods

Pima County staff used several outreach methods to notify the public about opportunities to provide input, including the following:

A dedicated website: www.pima.gov/salestax

Pima County's social media

Press releases and media advisories

Notices to Pima County's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and members of the public that had submitted comments to the TAC.

Notices to City and Town transportation and management staff

Notices to Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)/Pima Association of Governments (PAG) staff

Notices to County homeowner associations

Notices to city and town neighborhoods located in vicinity of hearing locations

Requests to the Pima County Sales Tax Advisory Committee to distribute notices to their networks

City of Tucson's NewsNet email blast

Pima County e-newsletter and calendar

III. Opportunities for Public Input

1. Public Hearings

The Sales Tax Advisory Committee held 7 hearings around the County. Attachment 1 includes a list of the hearing locations, dates and times, as well as summaries for each public hearing. In total, 69 members of the public attended, and 51 either spoke or submitted a comment card. The hearings were not formal meetings of the Committee. An average of three to four committee members attended each hearing, along with staff from the County Administrator's office and the Department of Transportation. Often staff from the Board of Supervisors' district offices also attended. The format of the hearings included a brief presentation by Chairman Wendell Long (Attachment 2), followed by an open call for comments from the

public. This format, as opposed to the formal committee meetings, provided the opportunity for follow-up questions and often resulted in a dialog between the public, committee members and staff.

2. Public Meetings

The Committee held 7 meetings open to the public. Attachment 3 includes a list of the meeting locations, dates and times, as well as summaries for each meeting. Some meetings were followed by a public hearing. The majority of each meeting was dedicated to presentations and discussions on issues on the agenda, and requests for additional information. A "Call to the Audience" was included at the beginning and the end of each meeting and the Committee also received comments via comment cards for those who attended the meetings but chose not to speak. Attendance at the meetings was low in comparison to the hearings. The hearings were promoted more widely as they provided more opportunity for public comment. In total, x members of the public attended these Committee meetings and either spoke or submitted comment cards. Public comments and comment cards are included with each meeting summary.

3. Electronic feedback forms

We received the most participation via the submittal of electronic feedback forms (x individuals as of March 13, 2018). Attachment 4 includes a summary log of responses.

4. Pima County Board of Supervisor Meetings – Comments Made During Call to the Audience

The Committee started meeting on September 29, 2017. The Board of Supervisors generally meets twice a month and had several meetings since the Committee started. During the "Call to the Audience" segment of the Board of Supervisor meetings there were members of the public that spoke about issues relating to the proposed sales tax. For those meetings, the "Call to the Audience" section of the meeting minutes are attached (Attachment 5)

5. Tucson Association of Realtors' Poll

(Draft after Committee receives polling results - Attachment 6)

6. Other

County staff were invited to attend other meetings during this time frame, which included the opportunity to solicit feedback from those present regarding the proposed sales tax. A new group that may advise the Board of Supervisors is the South East Regional Council. This Council met on January 18, approximately 40 attended, and many of those in attendance completed comment cards (Attachment 7). Staff also attended the Catalina Foothills Association meeting on January 23 with an estimated attendance of over 100, the Western Pima County Coordinating Council in Ajo on February 1 with an estimated attendance of 40 (majority raised their hands in support of a sales tax for road repair so long as audits and a termination clause are included to prevent misspending), and the Pima County Community Information Night at Tucson Estates on February 27 with an estimated attendance of x.

IV. Summary of Comments

Since the Committee was formed to make recommendations to the Board on the following three questions, the public comments will be summarized by these questions:

Should Pima County adopt a half-cent general sales tax? If so,
Should revenues from the tax be used to fund road repair and/or reduce property taxes?
Should the tax be permanent or temporary?

Note that no attempt was made to count the number of those in favor or opposed, but all of the comments were reviewed and the following are general conclusions based on that review.

1. Should Pima County adopt a half-cent general sales tax?

Considering all of the input, those that responded were generally more likely to express support for a sales tax versus those expressing opposition to a sales tax.

2. Should revenues from the tax be used to fund road repair and/or reduce property taxes?

For those in support of the sales tax, and even many of those in opposition to the tax, support was clearly highest for funding road repair only, followed by a combination of road repair and property tax reduction. There was very little support for funding only property tax reduction.

3. Should the tax be permanent or temporary?

Responses appeared to be split equally between those who supported a temporary tax and those that supported a permanent tax.

4. Other noteworthy comments or themes

Many of those that commented expressed concern regarding whether the funding would be spent for the specified purposes, or asked what could be done to ensure that the funds would be spent accordingly. This apparent lack of trust was clear not only in comments made by those who expressed opposition to the sales tax, but also by those who expressed support for the tax. For those who expressed opposition to the sales tax, a common comment was that taxes were too high and/or the County should find funding for road repair within existing revenues.

Attachments