



Example Request Letter

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Please accept a request for a presentation to your Council from the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) Executive Director for the purpose of discussing information regarding the Measure A Transportation Sales Tax, the proposed Draft Transportation Sales Tax Renewal Expenditure Plan and recent public opinion poll results. Considering an upcoming early renewal of the ½ cent transportation sales tax, TAM is in the process of educational outreach to Cities and Towns to provide information on the draft proposal. TAM is seeking input on the Draft Plan, such as responses to the following:

- Does this new Draft Expenditure Plan meet the needs of your jurisdiction? What are your key priorities?
- What other information do you need to support the plan in the future? Details on trip reduction, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, travel time benefits and other metrics can all be made available for your assessment of whether to support.
- What flexibility would you like to see in the program? Could you support a re-set of the plan every 10 years, or more frequently? Staff at TAM can present examples on how that would be done.
- What additional organizations or local interests should be consulted regarding the plan?

Background

Measure A, Marin's ½-cent Transportation Sales Tax, is a critical local funding source that generates approximately \$25 million each year to support our local transportation needs. The Measure was passed by over 71% of Marin voters in 2004 and funds are spent in accordance with the 20-year Measure A Transportation Sales Tax Expenditure Plan.

The expenditure plan is now nearly 15 years old and the TAM Board of Commissioners has been considering early renewal of the sales tax measure to respond to current needs and adjusting how the funds can be spent moving forward. Renewing the transportation sales tax would create an ongoing reliable stream of revenue for much needed projects and programs.

During the first quarter of last year, TAM visited local jurisdictions to provide educational briefings to and introduce the idea of renewing and possibly increasing our county-wide transportation sales tax. These briefings focused on providing information about the projects and programs supported by the current sales tax and receiving feedback from elected officials and residents on priorities and unmet needs. The idea of legislatively increasing the statewide sales tax cap to enable an increase in the transportation sales tax was initially discussed, then abandoned.

A baseline poll was conducted in May 2017 to gauge public opinion on renewing the ½-cent sales tax or potentially increasing of the sales tax to ¾-cent. The poll demonstrated considerably more support for renewing the sales tax rather than increasing the sales tax, with 72% of likely 2018 voters supporting renewal of the existing ½-cent transportation sales tax and a range from 60.8% to 66.9% supporting an increase to ¾-cent.

In January 2018, a second poll was taken, specifically addressing a renewal of the current sales tax and testing the features of a Draft Sales Tax Renewal Expenditure Plan, along with supportive informational statements and critical statements. The results of this second poll will be reviewed.

Proposal Overview

Back in June 2017, the TAM Board approved the formation and membership of a Transportation Sales Tax Expenditure Plan Advisory Committee (EPAC). The EPAC is comprised of 24 community members representing a broad range of neighborhood, business, civic and advocacy interests in Marin County. The EPAC met between June and December 2017 to develop a plan to renew the existing ½-cent transportation sales tax and consider expanding the sales tax to ¾-cent. The membership of that Committee is attached.

The EPAC reviewed the baseline poll results, received broad education about the current ½-cent transportation sales tax and learned from a variety of agencies about current transportation programs and unmet transportation needs. Based on this information, the EPAC developed a draft expenditure plan that culminated with a consensus recommendation to pursue a 30-year extension of the current ½-cent sales tax to be placed on the ballot in November of 2018. The new Expenditure Plan would take effect immediately, replacing the existing plan. A 2/3rds approval of those voting would be required.

A chart and factsheets detailing the committee recommendations are attached. Primary goals of the ½-cent plan are to keep the core structure of the existing expenditure plan and expand much needed congestion relief programs.

Although there were diverse interests represented by the EPAC, the committee reached consensus and demonstrated a strong commitment to building from the current successful transportation sales tax measure, keeping the core structure and maintaining the top-line funding percentages:

- 7.5% to Highway and Interchange Improvements
- 26.5 % to Local Streets and Roads
- 11% to Safe Routes to Schools, Education, Infrastructure and Crossing Guards
- 55% to Local, Rural, Student and Special Needs Transit

With No New Taxes the Proposal Would:

- Respond to current needs and adjust how the funds can be spent moving forward
- Continue a reliable stream of local revenue into the future to enable long-term planning
- Maintain and expand successful projects and programs, including the Safe Routes to Schools programs, local road maintenance and local transit
- Expand school-related transit and yellow bus programs
- Prevent cuts in the current Crossing Guard program
- Provide a local funding source for key operational improvement projects including the Marin-Sonoma Narrows and the Northbound US-101 to Eastbound I-580 Direct Connector
- Leverage other regional, state and federal funding for needed transportation improvements
- Provide seed funding for projects related to sea-level rise, innovative technologies and for support of mobility concepts for first/last mile transit solutions and peak hour demand management

In addition to recognizing the importance of continuing this local funding source, the committee also recognized the current tax-sensitive climate. To protect and maintain the existing sales tax and associated programs, the committee did not think it was prudent to try to increase the tax. They recognized the changes in our transportation environment and the need to adjust how funds are being spent. They also acknowledged the rapidly changing landscape of transportation and mobility choices and therefore recommend having milestone review opportunities every 10 years to adjust plan elements to address future conditions.

Follow-up Poll

A follow-up poll was conducted in January 2018. The follow-up poll explored renewing the existing Transportation Sales Tax, testing over 750 likely voters for a November 2018 ballot measure in Marin County.

The 2018 follow-up poll confirmed that transportation issues and traffic congestion continue to be top concerns of Marin County residents. There is great interest in transportation issues and solutions. The 2018 poll results show strong support for renewing the transportation sales tax with support from likely 2018 voters at 77.9%, and after a series of critical statements were presented, 73.2%.

Next Steps

At this time, TAM is seeking additional input from TAM's member agencies- the cities, towns and county of Marin- on the proposed Transportation Sales Tax Renewal Expenditure Plan. Based on input from agencies and residents from this ongoing outreach, TAM staff will write and refine a detailed Final Draft Transportation Sales Tax Renewal Expenditure Plan.

In April or early May, the TAM Board will consider voting on the Final Draft Transportation Sales Tax Renewal Expenditure Plan and will decide whether to direct staff to seek approval from all 12 local jurisdictions on the Final Draft Transportation Sales Tax Renewal Expenditure Plan.

For the Transportation Sales Tax Renewal Expenditure Plan to be placed on the ballot for consideration by voters in November 2018, the 75-word ballot argument and Expenditure Plan must be submitted to the Registrar of Voters no later than August 10, 2018. The TAM Board would need to act no later than July 2018, allowing time for the Marin County Board of Supervisors to make a final decision on whether to put the measure on the November 2018 ballot.

TAM appreciates feedback from your council.

Sincerely,

Dianne Steinhauer
Executive Director
Transportation Authority of Marin

Attachments:

Transportation Sales Tax Renewal Expenditure Plan
Transportation Sales Tax Renewal Expenditure Plan – Factsheets
Expenditure Plan Advisory Committee membership
January 2018 Poll of likely November 2018 voters- Topline Results
Transportation Sales Tax Renewal Process – Likely Next Steps