

# CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES NIGHT

## OCTOBER 9TH - 7PM

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## Sales tax measure on Lafayette's November ballot

By Elaine Borden Chandler

The City of Lafayette has recently been grappling with the projection that starting in the 2024-2025 fiscal year, it will be running on an annual \$2 million deficit. In an attempt to avoid this without cutting services, there will be a measure for a half-cent increase to the Lafayette sales tax on the November ballot.

"We're not seeking to add new programs. Rather, the additional revenues that we receive through Measure H would keep our current level of services going," said City Manager Nirroop Srivatsa.

In practical terms, a half cent tax (e.g. a half percent tax) would mean that for anything bought in Lafayette, half a cent would be added per dollar to the price in addition to the normal sales tax. For example, a \$10 item would have 5 more cents added to the sales tax and a \$50 restaurant bill would have an additional 25 cents.

Like all sales taxes, this tax would not apply to groceries, rent, mortgage payments, prescription medicine, or utilities. However, unlike Lafayette's current 8.75% sales tax, all of the revenue

from this half cent tax would remain in Lafayette. At present, only 1% of Lafayette's 8.75% sales tax returns to the city, with the rest going to the State, the county, and certain agencies such as BART.

This revenue would go exclusively to Lafayette's General Fund. The Lafayette General Fund finances city services such as street and park maintenance, paying police officers, and wildfire preparedness, as well as programs such as the Traffic Calming Program and the Public Art Program.

According to the city, the current deficit comes from the increased costs for street repair, infrastructure maintenance, and insurance; general inflating costs that have not been matched by equally increased revenue; and unfunded mandates from the state, such as housing measures.

If this tax measure does not pass, Lafayette will need to make a 10% cut to expenses. What these cuts would be has not been decided yet, but one possibility has been 10% cuts to all departments and programs

across Lafayette. However, if the council decided that to keep fully funding a particular program, the expenses in other departments and programs would require even deeper cuts than 10%.

If the measure does not pass, the General Fund Reserve — money kept for unexpected costs such as wildfires, earthquakes, or other disasters — will also shrink. It is maintained at 60% of the General Fund and will be proportionately reduced.

This measure includes a citizen's oversight committee to give residents control over how the revenue from the measure would be spent. Residents of Lafayette would apply and be chosen by the City Council to advise them on how to distribute the funds according to the desires and needs of Lafayette's citizens. The revenue distribution would also be part of the public annual budgeting process.

Those interested in more detail on the tax measure can visit the City of Lafayette's Sale Tax Measure page at [lovelafayette.org](http://lovelafayette.org).

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## Cancer Support Community

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as well as programs for the children of cancer patients receiving treatment.

They help anyone affected by cancer for free, receiving their funding primarily through three annual fundraising events, corporate and foundation grants, and individual donors. While other affiliates of CSC have raised money for centers, this is easily the largest center the CSC has built from the ground up.

"There's nothing like this in Northern California, it will be the first of its kind in terms of the psychosocial, emotional support care," said Libby Eppinga, the Director of Donor Support & Capital Campaign. "It is to meet the growing cancer statistics that we're going to see over the next 20 years."

The center will be two stories tall and 12,000 square feet, including classes with remote broadcasting, a demonstration kitchen, an arts room, a library, a social center, counseling rooms, and rooms for acupuncture and massage. On the

property there will be walking trails, healing spaces, and a community garden for organic food. The rest of the land will be planted with native plants.

Nature has become increasingly integrated into the medical community as its health benefits have become more widely acknowledged. CSCSFBay started seriously looking for a place to build a new center in 2018 and found the parcel by the reservoir. Its combination of nature, accessibility, and proximity to the reservoir, community garden, and Orchard Nursery made it ideal. The owners, Ray and Angelina Leal, were originally going to sell the land to CSCSFBay but decided to donate it instead.

CSCSFBay is currently in the process of receiving building permits for the center. After submitting their plans twice, CSCSFBay received approval from the City of Lafayette in August and next will be submitting plans to Contra Costa County so they can put a shovel to the ground.

Said shovel is going to be part of a raffle at

CSCSFBay's annual Gala in the Grove at Cal Shakes on Oct. 6 — the winner will receive an engraved shovel and a place at the center's groundbreaking. The Gala will feature Rob Tufel, the former CEO of CSCSFBay, who will give a presentation on the center's progress and Emily Chuah, a breast cancer patient finishing her final semester at Berkely Law. All ticket proceeds will go to supporting CSCSFBay's programs.

The center is expected to begin building late this fall or next spring. CSCSFBay's is eager to have local community members engage. Their long-term goal is for the center to be an intersection of the cancer community and the local community. Those who are interested now can contact Eppinga for a tour of the site or a coffee and chat about the center. For the future?

"I think any aspect of the property that you look at is a way for people to engage," said Eppinga. "I think that the possibilities are endless, but we won't quite know until we are living in that space."

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