

FAQ about the Salinas Safe Neighborhoods/Essential Services Measure

As of 7/21/09

Q: Did Salinas declare a state of emergency?

A: Yes. Due to decreasing revenues, the State Budget crisis and anticipated State “takeaways” to local government which will result in cuts to public safety and other essential services, on July 21, 2009 the Salinas City Council voted unanimously to declare a State of Emergency because of a recognized threat to public health, safety, and welfare in the City.

Among other findings, the City Council determined that if staff and service levels are not at least partially restored, public safety standards will degrade, crime and violence will increase, the City’s children will not have adequate and safe educational and recreational opportunities, and the health safety and welfare of residents will be endangered.

Q: What are our most urgent community service needs at this time?

The City and the community (through extensive community surveys and neighborhood meetings) have identified the following as the most urgent service needs:

- *Expanding programs to identify and shut down drug or gang house*
- *Increasing job training programs for local youth*
- *Expanding anti-gang and youth violence prevention programs*
- *Expanding police anti-gang operations*
- *Increasing police patrols of schools and surrounding neighborhoods*
- *Reducing 911 response times for police officers*
- *Establishing community policing so police work more closely with local businesses, community groups and residents*
- *Hiring, training and retaining additional police officers*

Q: What is the Salinas Safe Neighborhoods/Essential City Services Measure?

A: The Salinas Safe Neighborhoods/Essential Services Measure is a local revenue measure that voters will consider in November 2009. If passed, revenue generated by the measure can be utilized to protect Salinas residents by increasing youth gang and violence prevention; after-school recreation and mentoring; expanding job training; hiring more police to patrol neighborhoods and schools; retaining firefighters and paramedics; establishing community

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policing; prostitution prevention; crime fighting technology; and protecting essential services. Every dime generated by this measure, if adopted, is legally required to be spent for the benefit of Salinas's residents and cannot be taken by Sacramento.

Q: Why was this placed on the ballot?

A: According to the Police Chief's recent 90-day Public Safety Report to the community, the City needs an additional 84 sworn officers to get back to the safety levels it maintained over ten years ago. Our gang and crime problem is growing, but the Salinas Police Department is not. We estimate that there are more than 3,500 gang members and associates in the City. Since January 2008, there have been 34 gang related homicides in Salinas. Given the increase in gang violence in Salinas, unfortunately the City simply does not have enough police officers to keep the City safe.

Q: The Police Chief has referred to Community Oriented Policing. What is that?

A: Community Oriented Policing allows police officers to work more closely with local businesses, community groups and residents to prevent crime and violence before it happens. Three-quarters of our residents believe that people in Salinas are afraid to leave their homes due to the threat from gangs. Community Oriented Policing is a proven method in effectively fighting gangs/drugs and improving public safety.

Q: What else can we do to fight gangs/drugs?

A: As the Police chief has said, we can't just arrest our way out of this problem. The most effective way to solve Salinas's gang and crime problems is a multi-faceted approach that includes a stronger police presence, coupled with expanding gang prevention programs, in-school anti-gang education, after school recreation, tutoring, mentoring and job training programs that prevent youth from becoming gang members in the first place.

Q: How much would this cost?

A: A penny per dollar spent in Salinas excluding the purchase of food purchased as groceries and prescription medication. Visitors to Salinas – not just Salinas residents – pay. This measure is not a tax on property.

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Q: What are the fiscal accountability safeguards?

A: Based on recommendations from local citizens, there will be annual reviews of all funds, Independent Audits, and NO funds can be taken away by Sacramento.

Q: How does this impact Measure V?

A: This is a separate Measure and does not interfere with Measure V.

Q: What is the voter threshold?

A: This Measure requires 50% +1 to pass.

Q: How can I get more information?

A: Please visit the City's website at
<http://www.ci.salinas.ca.us/leadership/elections.cfm>