



News Release

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Future of ‘Quality of Life’ Services at Risk in Measure A Vote *Residents praise the programs, but funding depends on voters’ decision*

RIVERSIDE, CA (May 22, 2013) – Many programs that contribute to Riverside residents’ overall quality of life would face elimination if voters reject Measure A, which asks whether the City should continue the century-long, voter-approved practice of transferring water revenues to the General Fund, which pays for most city services.

Programs that have been identified for possible cuts include the 311 system, youth swimming lessons at local pools, and half the funding for the Janet Goeske Senior Center, and the citywide Wi-Fi program. Elimination of those programs and others, plus proposed cuts to public safety, are needed to address the \$6.7 million hole in the city budget that would be created if voters reject Measure A.

The 311 system allows residents to quickly and efficiently call for city services on things like potholes or graffiti removal. Youth swimming lessons provide a positive after-school activity for kids, helping to keep them busy and out of trouble. And the Janet Goeske Senior Center provides programs to hundreds of seniors each year. These services have raised Riverside’s quality of life and made it a community where people desire to live and raise families.

“Some of these programs are very popular, but we are facing a potential \$6.7 million hit to the General Fund,” Riverside Mayor Rusty Bailey said. “We owe the voters an explanation of what is at stake here, and these programs have been identified as among those that we likely would have to cut.”

The proposed cuts were included in a preliminary report from City Manager Scott Barber, who recommended the City Council cut 79 positions, including 21 in public safety, if Measure A fails. The proposed public safety cuts include seven police officers who patrol area schools and two Fire Department squads made up of 12 firefighters.

Those services are funded with money contributed to the city’s General Fund by the water revenue transfer. Riverside voters have voted three times to allow the transfer, and Measure A simply reaffirms

these previous voter actions. The \$220.7 million General Fund pays for most City services, including \$122.6 million for police and fire services in the most recent fiscal year.

The transfer of a fixed percentage of water funds revenues will continue if more than 50 percent of voters casting ballots vote “yes” on Measure A. If the measure does not receive a majority vote, the City Council will have to cut \$6.7 million from the 2013-14 budget and take a similar amount from the city’s roughly \$40 million in reserves to finish out the 2012-13 budget.

Riverside voters should have received their ballots by now. They must be returned by June 4. The election is being conducted by mail; there is no polling place voting. If Measure A were to fail, the exact cuts would be determined by the City Council next month.

The \$6.7 million per year at stake in the Measure A election represents about 3 percent of the General Fund each year. To prepare for a possible loss of that money, Barber in his report attempted to impose a 3 percent reduction to every department funded by the General Fund.

Of the non-public safety departments, Public Works and Parks, Recreation and Community Services could be especially hard hit. Public Works could lose nearly 30 FTEs and Parks, Recreation and Community Services could lose more than 12 Full Time Equivalent employees.

Other potential cuts include all the crossing guards who help children get across busy intersections near schools, the Office of Neighborhoods, two of the six animal control officers who patrol the city, half the funding for the city’s graffiti abatement program, fireworks at area parks on July 4th and half the budget of the Janet Goeske Senior Center.

“I recognize that many residents see these programs as part of what makes Riverside a city in which they want to live and work,” Barber said. “But, unless we want to pursue larger cuts to public safety, which I would not recommend, we will have to cut somewhere.”

Proposed cuts, and the amount proposed for reductions, include:

- \$806,000 to eliminate the crossing guard program.
- \$770,000 to eliminate the Wi-Fi program.
- \$713,000 to eliminate the 311 program.
- \$470,000 to the graffiti abatement program, which is half the program’s budget.
- \$428,000 to Parks, Recreation and Community Services, including \$189,000 at the Janet Goeske Senior Center; \$149,000 in cuts to swimming programs; \$65,000 for fireworks at Mt. Rubidoux and La Sierra parks on July 4th; and \$25,000 to the Mariachi Festival.
- \$421,000, from the City Manager’s budget, including a staff member who focuses on the “Seizing Our Destiny” community visioning project.
- \$306,000 to the General Services Division to eliminate the Broadcasting Division, which produces informational content on city services for broadcast on cable Channel 3, leaving only \$50,000 to pay contractors to broadcast the City Council meetings.
- \$270,000 to eliminate two of six animal control officers.
- \$250,000 to landscape maintenance, a 7 percent reduction.

- \$70,000 for the Office of Neighborhoods.
- \$70,000 to Code Enforcement.

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