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Measure R Frequently Asked Questions

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What is Measure "R"?

Measure R asks voters to authorize a new half-cent sales tax for Los Angeles County that would finance dozens of transportation improvement projects -- everything from fixing potholes to major highway construction, buying clean-fuel buses to building new rail lines. If the measure garners at least a two-thirds vote, it will become law January 2, 2009, with the tax taking effect in July 2009.

How much money would it generate and for how long?

Measure R is expected to generate \$40 billion over 30 years. These monies may also enable Los Angeles County to qualify for additional state and federal transportation funds that may otherwise be awarded outside of Los Angeles County.

Exactly what projects would the money fund?

Measure R will fund a variety of new rail, bus and highway projects. Among these are the Foothill Extension of the Metro Gold Line, a subway extension and Expo light rail line on the Westside, highway enhancements such as adding capacity to the I-5 from the I-605 to the Orange County Line, an extension of the Metro Orange Line busway to Chatsworth, a rail connection to LAX, and much more. In developing Measure R, the Metro Board of Directors approved a complete expenditure plan detailing how all of the funds will be spent.

Do local jurisdictions benefit from this tax?

Yes. Beyond the specific projects cited in the expenditure plan, the region's 88 cities and County unincorporated areas will receive 15 percent of all sales tax revenue for local needs such as transit service improvements, street resurfacing, left turn signals, bikeways, pedestrian improvements and more. In addition, 20 percent of the sales tax revenue will subsidize Countywide bus operations, helping to help keep fares low for

seniors, students and commuters.

What would be the yearly cost to individuals here in LA County

The private nonprofit Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) estimates that the tax increase would cost each resident an average of \$25 per person annually.

What are the economic impacts of Measure R?

The LAEDC also projects the construction of projects listed in Measure R would create over 210,000 new jobs and infuse \$32 billion into the local economy.

How do we know the money will be spent on transportation improvements?

To ensure that Measure R funds are spent in Los Angeles County for what voters were promised, the ballot measure calls for an annual independent audit and report to taxpayers, plus ongoing monitoring and review of spending by an independent taxpayer oversight committee.

How is the revenue distributed among the County's different sub-regions?

The dozens of highway, bus and rail projects specified in the plan are spread throughout the County. In addition, each of the individual cities and unincorporated areas within Los Angeles County will receive a share of the revenue to use at their discretion for local transportation needs.

If there's no project in my immediate neighborhood, how does Measure R affect my neighborhood?

All of the region's 88 cities and unincorporated areas will receive a portion of the sales tax revenue to use at their discretion to fix potholes, add left turn lanes, make bike and pedestrian enhancements and implement other local transportation needs. Further, improvements in various regions will make it easier for all taxpayers to travel from one area of the County to another.

How much of the revenues generated will go for Metro administrative costs?

The measure limits Metro administrative costs to no more than 1.5% each year.

Are there already transportation sales taxes in LA County?

Yes, there are currently two half-cent transportation sales taxes in LA County.

How has the money been used from those sales taxes?

Los Angeles County has greatly expanded bus and rail service, freeway carpool lanes and local street improvements over the past decade from the revenue generated by the existing sales taxes. That has allowed the area's transportation infrastructure to keep pace with major growth in population, employment and goods movement throughout the area. We now have the third largest public transportation system in the nation, carrying 1.6 million boarding passengers on an average weekday, along with the world's largest network of freeway carpool lanes.

Why is another half-cent needed?

Population and job growth continue and port activity could more than double in the next quarter century. The revenue generated from the existing transportation sales tax is inadequate to fund the range of transportation projects to keep pace with the needs of Los Angeles County over the next 30 years.

How long will it take to complete these projects?

There are short, medium and long-term traffic improvements. Street resurfacing and deployment of additional bus and Metrolink service can be done relatively quickly. Construction of new busways and light rail lines often can be accomplished within five years, while highway and subway projects can take up to a decade or longer. However, no project can be completed without first having the funds to begin.