



City Hall
601 4th Avenue E.
Olympia, WA 98501
360-753-8244

City Council

Approval of a Resolution Adding a Ballot Proposition to the February 13, 2018, Special Election Authorizing a 0.1% Increase in Sales and Use Tax for the Purpose of Housing and Housing-Related Services

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Title

Approval of a Resolution Adding a Ballot Proposition to the February 13, 2018, Special Election Authorizing a 0.1% Increase in Sales and Use Tax for the Purpose of Housing and Housing-Related Services

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to Committee

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve the resolution adding a ballot proposition to the February 13, 2018, special election authorizing a 0.1% increase in Sales and Use Tax for the purpose of housing and housing-related services.

Report

Issue:

Whether the City Council should submit a sales and use tax increase proposal to the City's voters at the special election on February 13, 2018, to raise revenue for housing and housing-related services in the City.

Staff Contact:

Keith Stahley, CP&D Director, 360.753.8227

Mark Barber, City Attorney, 360.753.8338

Background and Analysis:

At the June 6, 2017, City Council Study Session, Stuart Elway of Elway Research presented the results of a resident voter opinion poll commissioned by the City. The Elway Poll asked residents to respond to a series of questions pertaining to housing and public safety. Mr. Elway reported there was strong support for a housing measure to raise income for housing and related services with nearly 8 in 10 of respondents supporting the package.

Many of the region's most vulnerable homeless end up on the streets of downtown Olympia without access to basic needs of safe housing, reliable food sources, and medical or mental health services. The City's recently completed Downtown Strategy revealed homelessness as the leading concern for the viability of Olympia's downtown area.

The Olympia City Council formed the Ad Hoc Committee on Housing Affordability in February 2017 to study, review and take public input on issues relating to homelessness and other critical housing related services. The Committee's investigation and research revealed a critical need for housing and housing related services for Olympia's and the region's most vulnerable citizens, including the mentally ill, veterans of America's Armed Forces, victims of domestic violence abuse and their children, unhoused families with children, and unaccompanied youth and young adults, including persons with substance abuse issues.

The state Legislature has provided a method for raising the necessary revenue to provide housing and housing-related services for the homeless in RCW 82.14.530 by an increase of no more than one-tenth of one percent of the sales tax or use tax within the City's municipal boundaries.

On July 11, 2017, the City Council passed Resolution No. M-1887, which recognized the regional need for housing and related services for the homeless, or persons in danger of being homeless, and considered raising revenue as provided by state law for housing and related services, should the County elect not to move forward with its own ballot proposal.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The poll conducted by Stuart Elway reported strong resident support for housing and related services.

Options:

1. Approve the proposed ballot Resolution.
2. Direct staff to modify the proposed ballot Resolution.
3. Do nothing at this time.

Financial Impact:

If the City's voters approve the ballot proposal, the sales and use tax within the City's municipal boundaries would increase by one-tenth of one percent to provide housing and housing-related services.

Attachments:

Resolution