



City Council Agenda Item

City Council Meeting Date: January 6, 2026

TO: Dean Albro, City Manager

FROM: Emily Prueitt, Community Relations Manager/Public Information Officer
e_prueitt@ci.lompoc.ca.us

Christie Donnelly, Management Services Director
c_donnelly@ci.lompoc.ca.us

Jeff Malawy, City Attorney
jmalawy@awattorneys.com

SUBJECT: Results of Lompoc Community “Needs and Funding” Survey; Direction on Next Steps for a Potential 2026 Ballot Measure for a Special Transactions and Use Tax to Increase Funding for Roads and Right-of-Way Maintenance, or Alternative Funding Options

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the City Council take the following actions:

- 1) Review and discuss the results of the FlashVote survey (attached), including the insights the survey provides regarding potential voter support and turnout for consideration of a possible 2026 ballot measure for a special transactions and use tax for roadway and right-of-way maintenance funding; and
- 2) If, following review and discussion of the survey results, the City Council wishes to continue considering such a ballot measure, then either:
 - a. Direct staff to prepare the special tax measure ordinance and all other necessary ordinances and/or resolutions to place the measure on the **June 2, 2026**, primary election ballot, and return to City Council for approval on January 20, 2026, and February 3, 2026, or earlier if necessary; or
 - b. Direct staff to prepare the special tax measure ordinance and all other necessary ordinances and/or resolutions to place the measure on the **November 3, 2026**, general election ballot, and return to City Council for approval later in the year;

(For either election date, a 4/5 vote of the City Council will be required to adopt the special tax measure ordinance and place it on the ballot. Two-

thirds (66.7%) voter approval will be required for the special tax measure to pass.)

or;

- 3) Provide alternate direction, such as directing staff to prepare a general tax measure to fund general city services (which would require unanimous Council declaration of fiscal emergency if scheduled for June 2026, or a 4/5 Council vote for November 2026, and 50%+1 voter approval on either election date), or not proceed with any ballot measure and instead pursue a different type of roadway funding option.

Background:

At its November 18, 2025, meeting, the City Council directed staff to proceed with a voter survey to assess community support, potential voter turnout and preferences related to a possible roadway maintenance tax ballot measure. The City Council directed staff to return and present the results of such a survey at the January 6, 2026, meeting. This direction was given following a staff presentation about the potential ballot measure for a transaction and use tax.

Staff evaluated available survey provider options and determined that FlashVote most efficiently met the timeline, cost and engagement objectives needed to collect statistically relevant community feedback. Working with FlashVote also most effectively ensured the completion of the City Council request on a limited timeline.

FlashVote utilizes short, frequent surveys and maintains participant anonymity. FlashVote surveys are open for 48 hours and is independent from governments. Surveys are sent out via email, text message, or phone call. These survey methods allow FlashVote to reach a diverse population of residents.

Using a variety of public outreach efforts, staff worked with FlashVote to establish a panel of survey respondents from the local area. GovDelivery notices, text messaging, email communications, public noticing and multiple social media postings were all used to encourage residents to voluntarily sign up on FlashVote.com/Lompoc. Phone calls were fielded from residents, ensuring them that the registration link was not a scam and that demographic information would remain anonymous. Community members were informed through all outreach efforts that their responses would remain anonymous and be reported in aggregate form.

As the panel of respondents was compiled, staff worked with FlashVote to develop questions for the survey that would provide the City Council with data to inform their decision-making process. Questions were designed to avoid any implied bias rather than focusing on or advocating for a specific outcome. The questions on the survey ensured that the results would provide data to better inform potential policy and decision-making discussions regarding whether to proceed with a ballot measure. Following the establishment of a panel of 419 participants, FlashVote conducted the survey from December 17 – December 19, 2025, and a total of 209 people participated in the survey.

Discussion:

The survey questions and response data are included in the attached results. The results provide insight into community perspectives regarding the potential timing of a ballot measure (June vs. November), in addition to issues of importance to the community which informs what the funding from a potential tax measure might be used for. Additionally, the data provides insight into potential community engagement and overall likelihood of participation in upcoming elections. The survey does not predict election outcomes but, rather, provides a snapshot of resident sentiment that may be considered when evaluating the feasibility of moving forward with a ballot measure.

When reviewing the survey results, the City Council should consider how the findings relate to the November 18 staff report, including:

- The projected ongoing roadway maintenance funding gap resulting from reduced right of way maintenance revenues;
- The distinction between general tax and special tax requirements;
- Consideration of transparency and policy controls available to use in conjunction with a general tax, such as a Council resolution of intention with expenditure plan, establishment of a separate fund for receiving and tracking the tax revenues, and/or a Citizen Oversight/Advisory committee;
- The pros/cons, deadlines, required Council actions, and anticipated costs associated with the June versus the November election;
- Any additional public outreach and research, including potential follow-up FlashVote surveys; whose findings might be beneficial in preparing a ballot measure.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with reviewing and discussing the survey results and then providing policy direction. Should the City Council direct staff to move forward in pursuing a ballot measure, then the fiscal impact of such direction would be dependent on the selected election date.

Referencing the November 18, 2025, staff report, there are fiscal impacts to pursuing a ballot measure. Based on the current number of registered voters in the City of Lompoc, the estimated cost for a June 2, 2026, ballot measure is \$60,000 and the estimated cost for a November 3, 2026, ballot measure is \$39,000. The General Fund would be responsible to cover these ballot-initiative related expenses and would require additional appropriations to the budget.

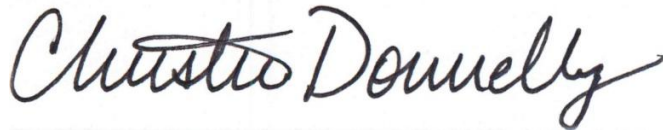
If a 0.5% transaction and use tax were to pass, the increased revenue is anticipated to be approximately \$3.75 million annually, with slight adjustments for inflation year over year.

Conclusion:

The results of the FlashVote survey provide City Council with the Lompoc community input data requested at the November 18, 2025, City Council meeting. The results offer insight into potential voter engagement. These results can help the City Council consider the feasibility, structure, and timing of a 2026 ballot measure.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Prueitt, Community Relations Manager/Public Information Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christie Donnelly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christie Donnelly, Management Services Director

Jeff Malawy, City Attorney

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL:

Dean Albro, City Manager

Attachment: FlashVote Survey Results