

# City Council Adjourned Regular Hybrid Meeting (Closed Session - 4:00 PM and Open Session - 6:00 PM)

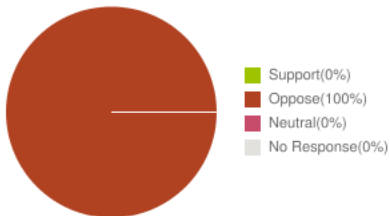
07-26-22 16:00

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
b) REPORT 22-0426 CONSIDERATION OF PLACING A LOCAL CONTROL CITY SERVICES MEASURE ON THE NOVEMBER 8, 2022 GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION BALLOT ASKING THE VOTERS TO APPROVE A GENERAL TRANSACTIONS AND USE TAX (SALES TAX or TUT) AT THE RATE OF THREE QUARTER CENT (3/4¢) (City Manager Suja Lowenthal)	9	0	9	0

## Sentiments for All Agenda Items

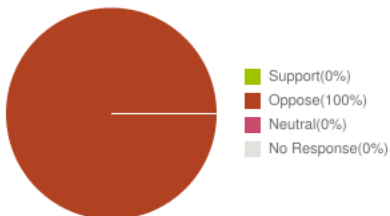
The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

### Overall Sentiment



Agenda Item: eComments for b) REPORT 22-0426 CONSIDERATION OF PLACING A LOCAL CONTROL CITY SERVICES MEASURE ON THE NOVEMBER 8, 2022 GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION BALLOT ASKING THE VOTERS TO APPROVE A GENERAL TRANSACTIONS AND USE TAX (SALES TAX or TUT) AT THE RATE OF THREE QUARTER CENT (3/4¢)  
(City Manager Suja Lowenthal)

### Overall Sentiment



### Matt McCool

Location:

Submitted At: 12:49pm 07-26-22

I strongly oppose this proposed tax! However, I strongly encourage the three City Councilmembers up for re-election this November to vote, "YES," on this tonight.

### Tracy H

Location:

Submitted At: 10:41am 07-26-22

OPPOSED

**Dean Francois**

Location: 90254, Hermosa Beach

Submitted At: 2:21am 07-26-22

The proposal to place this tax increase on the November ballot should be voted down.

While the staff report is carefully written to attempt to justify why this is needed, The report has two errors in it that need clarification. The report leads the reader to think that revenue generated in hermosa stays in Hermosa. This is incorrect. The report is actually saying ...raise the tax so the city can get the money. The other error in the report is.... Revenue from autos purchased by residents comes to the city rather than going to the city where the auto was purchased. This is incorrect.

We should not waste the cost of even printing to put this on the ballot. If this tax were to pass, commerce would be redirected to our neighboring cities and we could have a revenue loss. Most successful cities in Los Angeles county do not rely on this extra tax increase and we should not either. There are many different ways we can reduce our costs to balance our budget and cut wasteful spending. I have previously spoken at many council meetings regarding specific actions that have been wasteful spending.

Vote NO on this tax increase. Vote YES Dean Francois for City council!!!

**Howard L**

Location:

Submitted At: 8:02pm 07-25-22

Top quality cities don't increase the sales tax. This is mostly seen in the poorer per capita cities of Los Angeles County. Even Los Angeles has not increased the Sales Tax from the State and County total of 9.5%. Hermosa Beach has been receiving a windfall of property tax revenue through the pandemic due to having the highest Residential Property values per square foot in perhaps the entire country.

You Council is the most wasteful Hermosa Council in history with the least having been accomplished. Your council has a City Manager operation that is completely out of control.

Hire a real City Manager and get rid the top-heavy bureaucratic management your contract employee City Manager Suja Lowenthal has created, at primarily Justin Massey and Stacey Armato's direction. Cut all these absurd costly consultant studies which will NEVER BE USED. Everyone knows there is a planet global warming problem. This tiny city must take care of itself first before it takes on saving the entire planet. That Justin Massey and a tiny group of self-obsessed others are using this city's treasury for their own career building agendas is nothing less than criminal.

I also do not support doing as Inglewood, Hawthorne, Hawaiian Gardens and Long Beach have done. Hermosa Beach if it gets to the point of needing even more tax money would best negotiate with Redondo Beach and/or Manhattan Beach to become a district of one or the other of those two cities. This city has become little more than a costly bloated incompetent bureaucracy, accomplishing just about nothing of substance.

Should any of the three incumbents consider running for council (a clear sign of their own ignorance, in and of itself) and do support raising a single tax, then I highly recommend that they contact former two-term councilman Michael Keegan who was defeated in a 3rd term attempt by a gentleman named Roger Bacon. Roger Bacon used three simple words, as I recall, to accomplish the defeat of Michael Keegan who himself was orders of magnitude better a councilmember than anyone presently on the Hermosa Beach City Council. "NO TAXMAN KEEGAN" were the three words that defeated Michael Keegan. Were any of you around when that took place?

Btw should you be so lame AND IN FACT DUMB as to place a costly (doomed to failure) local Sales Tax Measure on the ballot, be sure to include an exclusion for low income Seniors of the same form as that of the Sewer Fee, for seniors to be able to file for a rebate of the city portion of the sales tax they will have to pay on any vehicle purchase they make of over \$10,000.

ENOUGH WITH MODELING THIS CITY AFTER HAWTHORNE, INGLEWOOD, LONG BEACH, AND HAWAIIAN GARDENS. Best ask Suja if she's lobbying her own city of Rancho Palos Verdes to increase their sales tax from 9.5%, 10%, or 10.25%.

As one candidate for the City Council (who has already filed his nomination papers) indicated, this sales tax idea should be DEAD ON ARRIVAL. You've wasted enough money already having staff work it up.

**Megg Sulzinger**

Location: 90254, Hermosa Beach  
Submitted At: 2:08pm 07-25-22

Council & Staff,

I am greatly opposed to this agenda item: CONSIDERATION OF PLACING A LOCAL CONTROL CITY SERVICES MEASURE ON THE NOVEMBER 8, 2022 GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION BALLOT ASKING THE VOTERS TO APPROVE A GENERAL TRANSACTIONS AND USE TAX (SALES TAX or TUT) AT THE RATE OF THREE QUARTER CENT (3/4¢)

We should absolutely not consider increasing the tax rate in Hermosa from \$9.50 to \$10.25. This increase would only discourage people to shop at businesses and eat out at our beautiful restaurants. With inflation at a record high and gas prices over \$5 most regular people are still struggling. It will 100% cause people to consider going to other beach cities rather than Hermosa if our tax rate is higher than our neighboring beach towns. Neither our neighbors in Redondo or Manhattan are considering this and they are significantly larger than us. This will have an impact on our little beach town more than help. I do not believe it is a good idea to "punish" non-residents to pay their fair share when they are an extremely small % of people who spend money in this town. Personally I eat out at our restaurants a minimum of 5 times a week and shop at our local retail shops once a week as well. I will not be able to afford to do this while inflation is still astronomical, gas prices at the current rate and rent being increased across the city if you consider putting this on the ballot. This is going to hurt residents more than anyone in addition to our small businesses who are STILL trying to recover from being closed during covid.

Please show the residents that you actually care about our well-being and do not consider putting this on the ballot in the fall. Thank you.

**Raymond Dussault**

Location: 90254, Hermosa Beach  
Submitted At: 11:45am 07-25-22

Dear Council & Staff:

I am absolutely opposed to placing a sales tax increase on the November ballot.

First, the staff report claiming this will mainly impact visitors is laughable. Residents, unlike staff, live here year round, visiting local businesses multiple times/week if not more. The tax increase will impact the residents disproportionately. That the staff is oblivious to this is inexplicable.

Second, Manhattan Beach, Redondo Beach, Torrance and El Segundo will all remain at 9.5% sales tax while ours soars to 10.25%, rendering our small local businesses uncompetitive.

Third, why would we want to drive visitors away? While residents spend more over the year, visitors still have a beneficial impact on our economy.

Fourth, this is a time of historic high inflation, gas and housing costs. Many people struggle to live here. Any tax increase will make it even more difficult on those that want to continue living in and contributing to our community.

Fifth and finally, our budget is bloated and out of control. We have zero fiduciary oversight and support a City Manager's office that spends money far out of proportion to surrounding communities. Hermosa's City Manager budget is multiple times larger than either Manhattan Beach (twice our size) or Redondo Beach (four times our size).. Redondo's City Manager takes up 1.1% of the budget, Manhattan's is 1.9% of theirs, while Suja's is a

whopping 3.1% of the Hermosa City Budget. This is before she was approved for a new executive position.

A City Manager manages the city but Council should act as a fiduciary backstop, not a rubber stamp.

Please vote NO on this terrible idea.

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Raymond Dussault 33 North Ventures, Inc. Hermosa Beach, CA 90254 Phone: (916) 205-1844

### **Ira Ellman**

Location:

Submitted At: 3:51pm 07-24-22

I am against the proposed 1% increase in sales tax. Although there are always theoretical good uses for additional tax dollars, taxes should not be increased unless getting such funds are crucial. Earlier this month, the City Council did not make any reductions or changes to the multi-million-dollar 2022-2023 budget (manpower, salaries, consulting, expense, etc.). This lack of scrutiny did not display any financial urgency that I think would be required to increase taxes on residents and visitors.

### **Carolyn Petty**

Location: 90254, Hermosa Beach

Submitted At: 3:46pm 07-24-22

Prior City Councils showed respect for the fiduciary responsibility granted to them by the Hermosa Beach residents. When times were tough, the city cut back. But now spending has spiraled out of control:

- 1) The current budget includes nearly \$2,000,000 in nice-to-have and unnecessary studies.
- 2) The City Attorney's budget has spiraled out of control to the point where now his salary is split between two different budget line items, as a way of obfuscating his total cost to the city.
- 3) The city inappropriately and illegally shut down CrossFit on Cypress. Total cost to the residents: over \$1.2M, but most likely other associated costs were hidden in other budget line items.
- 4) The City pays a Public Relations consultant nearly \$90,000 annually. She was originally hired during the oil ballot measure, her need is long since gone, but she is still on the payroll. What does she do? Among other things, she ensures the local papers do not print anything negative about the City. She uses the leverage of city advertising to ensure there is a quid pro quo.
- 5) In the past 9 months, the city has paid at least \$200,000 to climate change consultants.
- 6) The City Council approved a new position of Assistant City Manager position that enjoys total compensation approaching \$250,000.
- 7) The city paid \$27,000 for an unnecessary community survey.
- 8) In the past 13 months, the city has paid over \$125,000 to respond to public records requests. This could be reduced with more transparency - but this City Council/City Manager denies there is a problem.
- 9) The unnecessary bathroom park project at Fort Lots of Fun has now cost taxpayers \$410k, with the cost sure to rise. It is not completed and towers over the play structure. This serves the neighborhood and is not needed.
- 10) This City Council is even moving forward with a "test" hardscaping project on the greenbelt, at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars, while knowing that this is not only illegal given the current land restrictions, but while also being advised by the City Attorney that once the process begins of making ADA improvements at any point on the greenbelt, the city opens the door to an obligation of extending this across the entire greenbelt. Again, not only is this "test" project illegal, and opens the city up to lawsuits, being forced to retrofit the entire greenbelt will cost the taxpayers millions of dollars in ADA related costs. None of this is a concern to the council, with Councilmember Armato chastising the staff that this "test" was not happening fast enough.

The TOT was actually raised twice in the past 6 years – now at 14%. How was that not enough money? Wasn't the community sold these new taxes under the guise that this would be sufficient?

The bottom line is that this sales tax will only serve to feed the beast of excessive and unnecessary spending. Costs need to be reined in, and the focus needs to return to infrastructure and safety. This sales tax increase should not be put on the ballot.

### **Daniel Godwin**

Location:

Submitted At: 9:24am 07-24-22

This proposition should be considered dead on arrival. California is already one of the most expensive states with respect to cost of living. While we choose to pay a premium to live in Hermosa, it is unfair to levy any additional tax on its residents. Considering the current state of inflation, it is incredible that the city would even propose such a thing. The city needs to alter its perspective of taxing its way out of poor decision making with respect to our budget. Lets be wiser and not take the easy way out. Please do NOT pass this proposition for an increased sales tax.