

Argument in Favor of Measure U

Sebastopol's financial stability and quality of life is at risk, which is why all five members of your City Council are asking for your vote to approve a half-cent sales tax increase. This new revenue measure is needed to fund public safety, emergency preparedness, roads, infrastructure, parks, our library, our pool, and overall City operations. Sebastopol has faced mounting budgetary challenges over the years, with an unsustainable reliance on one-time funds. We have done our best to "live within our means," eliminating programs and deferring maintenance. Despite these efforts, our town faces a future of stagnant revenues and increasing expenses. This year's shortfall is \$700,000. Without this sales tax increase, the projected deficit climbs to \$2 million or more annually, with City reserves depleted within 3 years. This new local revenue source can change that trajectory. It will add only 50 cents to each \$100 purchase (groceries and prescription medications are exempt), and will be paid by all who shop in Sebastopol, including those who live here and those who visit. The measure will contribute \$1.5M annually to fund 10% of City services. It will be included in the City's annual audits so residents can see these funds being put to work, and it has a "sunset clause" ending the tax in 12 years. It stays here in Sebastopol, for Sebastopol. The County and the State cannot claim it. Combined with the City's continued revenue improvement efforts and vigilance on the expense side, this new sales tax is the solution needed to stop Sebastopol's financial decline. We must firm up our finances to secure the municipal services we expect and to ensure the quality of life we want. Your "yes" vote for Measure U is a vote for Sebastopol. Please vote yes on Measure U!