



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Department Name:** Community Services  
**Department No.:** 057  
**For Agenda Of:** April 5, 2016  
**Placement:** Departmental  
**Estimated Tme:** 30 minutes  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

---

**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department George Chapjian, Community Services Director  
Director(s) (805) 568-2467  
Contact Info:

**SUBJECT:** Library Advisory Committee Update and Ballot Measure for November 2016

---

**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive and file an update on the Library Advisory Committee (LAC);
- b) Provide direction to staff to pursue any or all of the following options:
  - i. Return to the Board to set a hearing at a later date to consider recommendations regarding placing a measure before the voters on the November 2016 General Election ballot for a possible special tax for each parcel in the unincorporated areas of the County for the purpose of providing public library services; OR
  - ii. Return to the Board to set a hearing at a later date to consider recommendations regarding placing a measure before the voters on the November 2016 General Election ballot for a possible special tax or special tax increase for each parcel in County Service Area (CSA) No. 3 for the purpose of providing extended library services;
  - iii. Pursue alternative methods to finance and provide library services in the unincorporated and incorporated areas of the County, for example, a Joint Powers Agency, County Services Area, Community Facilities District, Community

Services District, that would allow for placing a special tax for library services before the voters at a future election; and

- c) Determine that the above Recommended Actions are not the approval of a project that is subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(4), finding that the actions are not a project as they are the creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant impact on the environment, and direct staff to file the Notice of Exemption (Attachment F).

**Summary Text:**

County libraries have not kept up with the cost of operations over the years and as a result many libraries have had to adjust hours and services to the public. Some of the libraries in the County have been using reserves to fill budget gaps and maintain adequate levels of services, but their reserves are quickly depleting with potential drastic measures needed in the next year or two.

In large part prompted by the City of Goleta's request that the Board's Library Advisory Committee (LAC) support Goleta's effort at possibly placing a parcel tax measure on the November 2016 ballot to help their library, the LAC spent several meetings discussing and exploring the possibility of placing a County-wide measure on the November 2016 ballot that would benefit all of the libraries in the County.

However, given the complexities of coordinating similar or identical measures in the eight cities and unincorporated areas of the County, the fact that there seems to be little support for a tax measure from the Friends of the libraries groups, and that little time remains until November to effectively campaign for such a measure, the LAC decided to not pursue a parcel tax measure at this time. The LAC agreed unanimously to recommend that Board direct staff to explore a structure such as a Joint Powers Agency (JPA), County Service Area (CSA), Community Facilities District (CFD), Community Services District (CSD) that could allow for a unified ballot measure (one ballot for the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County) for possibly a future election cycle.

In addition to this recommendation, Supervisor Farr, who chairs the LAC, requested that the Board be given option to consider a possible parcel tax for just the unincorporated areas of the County.

Finally, The City of Goleta sent the Board a letter dated December 8, 2015 (see attachment B) requesting the Board place a measure on the November ballot for CSA No. 3 which would be identical to the measure they will place before the voters of their city.

Therefore, this report requests Board action on the following:

- Direct staff to pursue alternative methods to finance and provide library services in the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County, for example a JPA, CSA, CFD CSD.

- Consider placing a special tax parcel in the unincorporated areas of the County for the purpose of providing public library services before the voters on the November 2016 general election ballot. Or,
- Consider placing a special tax parcel in the CSA No. 3 for the purpose of providing public library services before the voters on the November 2016 general election ballot.

The cost for the County-wide measure is approximately \$132,000 and \$62,000 for a measure only in CSA No.3 respectively. If the Board chooses to place a measure on the ballot, staff will return with a budget revision requests for costs associated with the options above.

### **Background:**

The County Library Advisory Committee's (the "LAC") meetings have recently focused on exploring the possibility of placing a County-wide parcel tax measure on the November 2016 ballot. The discussion was facilitated by the City of Goleta's request for the LAC's support for a ballot measure on the November 2016 ballot that would ask voters in the City of Goleta and CSA No. 3 to authorize a parcel tax to help fund library services. The special tax would in essence help restore lost library hours that have been cut over the years due to budget issues that most local agencies have faced since 2006.

The LAC has for the better part of 4 meetings focused discussion and work around the exploration of a County-wide parcel tax levy to be placed on the November 2016 ballot. The discussion by the LAC surrounding the placement of a possible County-wide parcel tax on the November 2016 ballot was in large part prompted by a request from the City of Goleta that the LAC support a proposed ballot measure that Goleta would like to place on the November 2016 ballot for a parcel tax to support its library. Goleta requested the LAC's support because it not only needs to ask the voters in its city to vote on a parcel tax, but would also like to ask those voters living in CSA No. 3 to vote for an increase in the special tax rate to help the Goleta library because one-third of the Goleta library patrons are residents in CSA3.

The LAC discussed Goleta's request and concluded, as a group, that Goleta's library wasn't the only library that needed funding support: that all of the County's libraries were in need of more funding. Therefore, rather than support just one library, the LAC decided that it would explore and assess the possibility of a County-wide parcel tax measure in both the unincorporated areas of the County and the incorporated areas in the eight cities to benefit libraries. However, after several meetings and discussions about the logistics of such a measure, the LAC came to the conclusion that there was not enough public support and time to effectively run a campaign for such a tax measure. Another key factor that impacted its decision was that a County-wide ballot measure would only include the unincorporated parcels of the County, not the cities: The cities would have to place their own separate measures on the ballot. Coordinating a County measure and 8 city measures would be very difficult given the complexity of the issue and lack of time before the November election. Therefore, rather than engage in a difficult task with little time, the LAC recommended instead that the County explore alternative methods to finance and provide library services in the County that would allow a unified approach in placing a possible special tax measure on a future election cycle. That method is yet to be determined, but it may be

a Joint Powers Agency (JPA), a County Service Area (CSA), a Community Facilities District (CFD), or a Library Community Services District.

Despite the recommendation above, if the City of Goleta is going to assist its library with a measure on the November ballot, it requests that the County provide a measure identical to their city measure to levy a special tax per parcel in the CSA No. 3 unincorporated areas of the County. While not as comprehensive as the measures that would have included the entire County, including the eight cities, these two options would provide an opportunity to enhance funding for the libraries that serve residents of the unincorporated areas.

Funds generated from an increase in the special tax rate in CSA No. 3 would be used in CSA No. 3 for extended library services. However, disbursing funds generated from a broader measure levying special taxes per parcel in the unincorporated areas of the County might prove difficult without being divisive to the community. There would invariably be issues with amounts given to various libraries because some residents are served by City libraries and others by County libraries; some libraries may not receive any funding.

### **The City of Goleta's Request:**

A key decision for the Board is the consideration of the City of Goleta's request that the County approve the placement of a measure on the November 16 ballot for a special tax in CSA No. 3. Goleta feels it appropriate to ask residents in CSA No. 3 to vote on a parcel tax because they claim that one-third of Goleta's library patrons are residents of CSA No. 3. Goleta plans to also ask Goleta city residents to support its library by voting on parcel taxes that would benefit the library.

The proposal requested by Goleta is that the County put a measure for a special tax before the voters in CSA No. 3, and the City of Goleta would put its own tax measure before its voters. Goleta's request is that the two measures would be linked; that is, if one of the two measures (CSA No. 3 and City of Goleta measures) fails, the other would automatically fail, irrespective of the vote. Goleta feels that it isn't fair to ask the residents of one area to subsidize library services for the other.

However, if the Board chooses to place the broader measure levying special taxes per parcel in the unincorporated areas of the County on the ballot, then given that CSA No. 3 is in the County, that area would be part of the greater County unincorporated area. The CSA No. 3 option is requested by Goleta if the Board chooses not to support a measure levying special taxes per parcel in the unincorporated areas of the County.

In addition to not taking action at this time, the Board can take either of these two options to help the libraries with funding:

1. Initiating a process to place a measure for the levy of a special tax on each parcel in the unincorporated areas of the County on the November ballot. There is enough time to create the measure's language and get it placed on the ballot (see attached timeline). However, there may not be adequate time for supporters to actively campaign for passage

with the electorate. Additionally, given the lack of staff resources in CSD, the department would need up to \$32,000 to engage a consultant to coordinate and manage this process and to develop the ballot language and educational material needed to provide basic information to the public on the measure; or,

2. Initiating a process to place a measure for a special tax on each parcel in CSA No. 3 on the ballot for the November elections. Although the City of Goleta has committed to providing educational material about its measure, given that this is its request, the County would still need to develop the measure language and information material for voter review; therefore, there is still a cost to the County.

The incremental election cost to the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor Department should the measure levying special taxes per parcel in the unincorporated areas of the County be submitted to the voters of the County at the November 8, 2016 Presidential General Election is between \$40,000 - \$100,000, for the cost of printing the measure information in the sample ballots. Should a measure increasing the special tax rate only be submitted to the voters in CSA No. 3, the incremental cost is estimated to be between \$5,000 and \$30,000. These estimates are based upon a range of sample ballot pages between five and fifteen pages and could potentially be higher or lower depending upon the actual number of measure pages. In addition to the cost for the Elections Office, CSD would request, through a budget revision request, an additional \$32,000 to pay for a consultant or staff person to coordinate this process.

Elections Code Section 13001 provides that expenses authorized and necessarily incurred in the preparation for, and conduct of, elections generally are County charges. Should the measure be submitted to the voters, the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor and CSD will make budget revision requests for additional funding to offset the increased incremental costs to the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor and to CSD for coordination of the process.

### **Library Contributions from the County and Cities:**

The County currently provides \$7.80 per capita for the County and city libraries. The total contribution in FY 2015-2016 is \$3.4 million. Through the Agreement for Operation of a Countywide Library System, this money is allocated to the three library zones based on population served.

Financial contributions from the cities to their own libraries vary with a low of \$20,000 to a high of almost \$4 million per year depending on the size of the city (see attachment E).

Based on a 2012 State of California Report on libraries (this was the latest data available from the State report) , the libraries in Santa Barbara County reported an aggregate average of \$20.31 per capita in spending. The State mean was \$32.16 per capita. In comparison, here are some examples of other counties' per capita spending:

Tulare County	-\$ 6.14
Kern County	-\$ 9.69
San Bernardino County	-\$12.93

Fresno County	-\$27.94
Los Angeles County	-\$29.68
San Diego County	-\$32.63
Monterey County	-\$34.76
San Luis Obispo County	-\$35.17
San Mateo County	-\$68.03

The library directors for the three zones feel that the current budgets for the libraries are not sustainable. Most of the libraries have been using reserves to fill annual budget gaps. They are slipping in standards with books and training. At the current rate of spending, the reserves soon will be depleted and the libraries will need to take drastic steps.

**Citizen Concerns:**

Citizens are concerned about three things as they relate to their libraries:

1. Hours of operation
2. Programming, particularly with respect to technology
3. Collections

The librarians are reporting that they are slipping in all three areas.

**Options:**

- Pursue the creation of a library district, such as through a Joint Powers Agency, County Service Area, or other structure, that will allow for a unified County and City approach to placing a possible special tax measure on a future election cycle.
- Pursue the placement of a special tax per parcel in the unincorporated areas of the County on the November 2016 ballot.
- Pursue the placement of a special tax per parcel for CSA No. 3 for the November 2016 ballot.
- Not pursue the placement of any tax measure for library services on the November 2016 ballot.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

The County Elections office estimates the incremental election cost to the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor Department should a measure be submitted to the voters of the County at the November 8, 2016 Presidential General Election is between \$40,000 - \$100,000, for the cost of printing the measure information in the sample ballots. Should a measure only be submitted to the voters in CSA 3, the incremental cost is estimated to be between \$5,000 and \$30,000. These estimates are based upon a range of sample ballot pages between five and fifteen pages and could potentially be higher or lower depending upon the actual number of measure pages. Additionally, given the limited staff resources in the Community Services Department and the specific expertise needed in a process such as this, CSD would need up to \$32,000 to hire a consultant to coordinate and manage this process, draft the ballot language and create the education material needed for the ballot measure.

Again, if the Board chooses to place a measure on the November 2016 ballot, staff will return with a budget revision request for the needed funding.

**Special Instructions:**

Please send an original copy of the Minute Order to George Chapjian, at Community Services Department

**Attachments:**

Attachment A - LAC meeting highlights  
Attachment B - City of Goleta's request letter  
Attachment C - Ballot measure timeline  
Attachment D - Library Branch Budgets  
Attachment E - City General Fund Contributions  
Attachment F - CEQA Notice of Exemption

**Authored by:**

George Chapjian, Director, Community Services Department (805) 568-2467