

## **City of San Bernardino Frequently Asked Questions – Moving Forward**

### **How is the city of San Bernardino improving the quality of life for local residents?**

San Bernardino strives to become a model city for its diverse residents. After some financial setbacks, the City is moving forward on improving the quality of life for those who live, work and play in San Bernardino.

### **How have past economic recessions impacted city services?**

The 2008 recession made lasting impacts in San Bernardino County which led to substantial decreases in local sales tax revenue, lower home prices, and a high unemployment rate in our area. As a result, the City reduced city staff by 26%, and was forced to cut programs and services to residents.

In August of 2012 the City filed for bankruptcy, realizing further reductions would jeopardize the health and safety of its citizens. As part of the plan to relieve \$76.1 million in long-term obligation, the City was required to implement a number of financial stability measures.

Over the past few years, San Bernardino has continued to balance the City budget and shore up reserves by making smart staffing decisions, restructuring pensions and contracting out some services to save overall costs. However, given that our police department and other essential city services account for a large portion of the City's general fund budget, there is little left to cut. We know we need additional local funding to help support local community services.

### **How are City services in San Bernardino funded?**

Most funding for city services is dependent on revenue generated by property taxes, local and state sales taxes, and from our utility users taxes (UUT). However, the recessions led to substantial decreases in local sales tax revenue, resulting in significant cuts to the budget and cutbacks to local services. Because of these cuts, the City had to defer funding for services like public park maintenance, community policing and programs for senior citizens and youth. Decreased revenues also reduced our overall budget for residential street and sidewalk pavement rehabilitation.

### **Is the City of San Bernardino still in bankruptcy?**

No. The City of San Bernardino exited bankruptcy in 2017 and is still making strides to improve. This action relieved the City of 76.1 million in long-term obligations. Over the last few years, the City's top priority has continued to be building a stronger, more accountable and financially solvent city. While San Bernardino has gone through major changes to ensure the success of our financial goals, City leaders understand there is still more which must be done.

We are proud that despite challenges during the past financial setbacks, the City has been able to maintain our police force and basic services to the community. Today, that commitment to our community remains strong as we begin to see improvements in our local economy.

### **How is the City moving forward?**

As San Bernardino looks to the future, the City is working hard to improve our public safety and city services. In recent years, the City has taken a number of steps to maintain a transparent and open government while controlling costs to making services to our community more efficient.

To reach the goal of being a financially solvent city, San Bernardino has taken the following actions:

- Saved millions from General Fund by contracting refuse operation and certain legal services
- Annexed fire services into County Fire Protection District

- Created tiered pension program to alleviate future pension obligations
- Fee study underway to ensure costs to provide services are being fully recovered (could generate \$800 million)
- Reduced city workforce by 233 full-time positions
- Created a reserves policy to ensure the city's depleted reserves fund

### **What challenges still face the City?**

As we continue to evaluate the needs facing our city, it is clear additional funding is needed to strengthen public safety and 911 emergency response, retain and attract businesses, maintain city streets, improve local parks, and create safer and cleaner neighborhoods.

Additionally, approximately 2,400 San Bernardino children are served by our school and summer programs, and our gang and drug prevention programs. We need to prevent reductions to these programs, as they are more important than ever to keep students from dropping out, off the streets and out of trouble.

San Bernardino's streets and roads require substantial repair and repaving at a cost of \$200 million. Independent pavement management engineers rate nearly 80% of the roads in San Bernardino as either "poor" or "very poor".

Additionally, the City needs to maintain storm drains to reduce flooding, repair sidewalks and maintain local parks. We need to address these infrastructure needs now before they get worse and cost more in the long run.

### **Doesn't San Bernardino already have a sales tax measure in place to handle public safety?**

Yes. In 2006, Measure Z was a general sales tax passed by voters and has provided funding to maintain public safety services and personnel, anti-gang and anti-crime operations which included drug resistance education, and after school youth activities. While this funding produces an estimated \$9 million for these city services, it is set to expire in 2022.

In order to accomplish the City's goals, the City is considering renewing Measure Z in order to help provide funding for public safety and community services.

For more information on Measure Z and the community oversight committee reports, please visit: <http://www.sbcity.org/measureZ>

### **What specific needs is the City looking to address?**

As San Bernardino continues to evaluate the needs facing our city, it is clear additional funding is needed to address residents growing concerns, including:

- Improve public safety and emergency response
- Maintain city streets
- Retain and attract businesses
- Maintain youth violence prevention programs
- Create safer and cleaner neighborhoods

### **How can I learn more or provide feedback?**

You can learn more or take our online survey to provide feedback at <http://www.sbcity.org/movingforward>. You can also contact the City Manager's Office at 909-384-5122 or [sbinfo@sbcity.org](mailto:sbinfo@sbcity.org) with any questions or comments.