City of Sierra Madre

SAMPLE BALLOT
and Voter Information Pamphlet

GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION
TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 2016

MARK AND SAVE THIS SAMPLE BALLOT
For use at your Polling Place or for voting your “VOTE-BY-MAIL” Ballot

POLLS OPEN at 7 A.M.
AND CLOSE at 8 P.M.

The location of your POLLING PLACE
is shown on the back cover

CAUTION: Your polling place may have changed from a previous election
INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

To vote for any candidate whose name appears on the ballot, completely fill in the oval \(\Box\) in the area to the right of the arrow pointing from the candidate(s) of your choice with a BLACK OR DARK PEN ONLY.

Where two or more candidates for the same office are to be elected, vote for all candidates for that office for whom you desire to vote, not to exceed, however, the number of candidates who are to be elected.

To vote for a qualified write-in candidate (a person not listed on the ballot), write the name of the qualified write-in candidate in the blank space provided for that purpose under the appropriate office heading and completely fill in the oval \(\Box\) in the area to the right of the name written in. You must fill in the oval next to the name you write in or your vote will not be counted.

To vote on any measure, completely fill in the oval \(\Box\) in the area to the right of the arrow pointing from the word "YES" or from the word "NO" with a BLACK or DARK PEN ONLY. If you wrongly mark, tear or deface the ballot card, return it to the precinct board member and obtain another.

MARK YOUR CHOICE(S) BY FILLING IN OVAL \(\Box\) COMPLETELY WITH A BLACK OR DARK PEN ONLY.

**No. 12345**

**SIERRA MADRE**

For MEMBER of the CITY COUNCIL  Vote for no more than TWO

- JOHN HARABEDIAN
  - Criminal Prosecutor
- JOHN P. CAPOCCIA
  - Incumbent

For CITY TREASURER  Vote for ONE

- MICHAEL AMERIO
  - Certified Public Accountant

For CITY CLERK  Vote for ONE

- MELINDA CARRILLO
  - Business Owner

**MEASURE SUBMITTED TO THE VOTERS**

**UUT  UTILITY USER’S TAX MEASURE**  YES \(\Box\) \(\Box\) NO

To maintain City services, such as Public Safety, Paramedic and Library services, shall an Ordinance be adopted to:
1. Increase the City’s Utility User Tax (UUT) to a maximum of 10% for all utilities, to be effective on July 1, 2016; and
2. Extend and stabilize the funding by eliminating the "sunset" clause; and
3. Provide an exemption from the UUT for very low income households?

END OF BALLOT

101 Sierra Madre 4/12/16
CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Each Candidate’s Statement in this pamphlet is volunteered by the candidate. Although all candidates had the opportunity to submit a statement, some candidates may not have submitted a statement. A complete list of candidates appears on the Sample Ballot page of this pamphlet.

BALLOT MEASURES, ANALYSES, ARGUMENTS AND REBUTTALS

ANALYSES: The Impartial Analysis is an impartial summary of the results of the proposed measure or proposition.

ARGUMENTS: Arguments and/or rebuttal arguments in support of or in opposition to the proposed laws are the opinions of the authors and have not been checked for accuracy by any official agency.

Vote by Mail ballots may be dropped off at a polling place or to the elections official by the close of the polls on election day. Pursuant to Election Code Section 3020, Vote by Mail ballots received via United States Postal Service or a bona fide private mail delivery company must be postmarked or date/time stamped by April 12, 2016, and received by the elections official no later than 3 days after the election (April 15, 2016).

To find your polling place:
Under Current Elections or Voting Options, click on Find Your Polling Place; Follow the directions.
FOR MEMBER OF THE CITY COUNCIL
Four Year Term

JOHN HARABEDIAN
Age: 34
Occupation: Criminal Prosecutor

I am running for reelection because there is important work to be done that requires experienced leadership.

As your councilmember, I have worked the past four years protecting Sierra Madre in the face of challenges relating to the City’s budget, water supply, and aging infrastructure. The next four years will require continued diligence on all of these fronts. Sierra Madre will remain a safe, cost-effective, and full-service city as long as we, as a community, continue to demand quality public services, while providing the necessary resources to provide such services.

As your councilmember, I will continue to maintain the City’s high level of public safety, restore the City’s aged infrastructure, and protect the City’s independent water supply.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at jharabedian@cityofsierramadre.com. Thank you for your support.

/s/ John Harabedian

FOR MEMBER OF THE CITY COUNCIL
Four Year Term

JOHN P. CAPOCCIA
Age: 61
Occupation: Incumbent

As your Mayor and 32 year resident of this wonderful town, I want to ensure that Sierra Madre retains its distinctive character and charm. Having raised three children here with my wife Marta, I deeply appreciate the many attributes that make our town special.

During the past four years, I’ve provided strong leadership, have demonstrated sound analytical skills and have collaborated effectively with my fellow council members to:

- Fight over-development by completing the General Plan update and implementing sensible measures to preserve our small-town character
- Halt the degradation of our water supply, and implement steps to secure its long-term viability
- Ensure that Sierra Madre’s citizens get the most for their hard-earned tax dollars
- Ensure that our city government is transparent and open, where citizens work with their elected officials and city staff to manage the present and chart our future

Much remains to be done, especially to stabilize our finances and infrastructure. Working together, we can overcome our challenges. I am honored to serve you on Sierra Madre’s City Council, and I thank you in advance for your support.

/s/ John P. Capoccia
FOR
CITY TREASURER
Four Year Term

MICHAEL AMERIO
Occupation: Certified Public Accountant

Thirteen years ago my wife, Cyndy, and I searched for a San Gabriel Valley town, where we could buy a house and raise a family. We found Sierra Madre and never looked back.

Our three boys have attended St. Rita School, participated in Sierra Madre Little league, Sierra Madre Pony League, and Sierra Madre Boy Scouts. Sierra Madre is our community.

I have over 20 years of experience as a Certified Public Accountant. I am on the board of directors for Los Angeles Orphan Asylum and Maryvale. Additionally, I am a manager for a baseball team in Sierra Madre Little league.

As treasurer, I will share my years of financial experience, work to make the City accountable for expenditures and investments, and I will enrich financial transparency.

I respectfully, ASK FOR YOUR VOTE FOR CITY TREASURER.

/s/ Michael Amerio
Measure UUT is submitted to the voters by the Sierra Madre City Council to increase the current rate of the City's Utility Users Tax and eliminate the existing “sunset” clause in order to generate and stabilize additional municipal revenues.

Background.

A utility users’ tax (UUT) is a tax levied on each user of a utility (e.g. telephone, electricity, gas, water, wastewater, solid waste disposal, cable or video services) within the City’s boundaries. UUT revenues are paid into the City’s general fund and used to fund city services and programs, including library and public safety services.

The City's Utility Users’ Tax has been in force since at least 1993. In 2008, the voters approved an incremental increase in the UUT from 6% to 12%; however pursuant to City Council action, the UUT collection rate never exceeded 10%. The 2008 UUT legislation also included a “sunset clause” to reduce the rate from 12% to 6% over time, decreasing the rate to 8% on July 1, 2015, and again decreasing it to 6% on July 1, 2016.

The difference between a 10% UUT and a 6% UUT is approximately $1,000,000 which means that at 6%, there will be approximately $1,000,000 less revenues for general fund purposes, such as library and public safety.

Eliminating the “sunset” clause is proposed to stabilize general fund revenues.

A UUT Oversight Committee was formed pursuant to the 2008 voter approved UUT measure. The Committee has tasked with verifying that the additional UUT revenues generated from the 2008 UUT measure would be used to fund public safety services. The Citizen’s Oversight Committee has determined that the cost of providing public safety services exceeds the amount of UUT collected at 10%, thereby showing that the City uses the UTT to fund public safety services and that the service of the Citizen’s Oversight Committee has been fulfilled.

The Measure.

Measure UUT WILL:

- Increase the existing 8% UUT tax to a maximum of 10% on July 1, 2016.
- Eliminate the “sunset clause” so that the UUT tax rate will be stabilized at 10%, subject to the City Council's discretion to collect less than 10%.
- Modify the existing exemption to apply to very low-income households.
- Eliminate the citizen oversight committee as its role has been fulfilled.

Measure UUT WILL NOT:

- Tax access to the internet;
- Tax internet purchases and downloads, such as books, music, ringtones, games or similar digital products.

Measure UUT requires approval of a majority of voters. A “yes” vote for Measure UUT will approve the rate increase described above; a “no” vote will leave in place the City’s existing 6% Utility Users Tax Ordinance.

/s/ Teresa L. Highsmith
Sierra Madre City Attorney

The above statement is an impartial analysis of Ordinance or Measure UUT. If you desire a copy of the ordinance or measure, please call the elections official's office at (626) 355-7135 and a copy will be mailed at no cost to you.
ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE UUT

We respectfully ask that Sierra Madre’s citizens approve Measure UUT, which will set the Utility Users Tax (UUT) at 10% to maintain services that our citizens value and expect, and to keep Sierra Madre a full-service city with its own Police, Fire, Paramedics, and Library. Measure UUT merely provides a sufficient and stable revenue source to maintain the current level of services.

The city is now running a deficit of $529,000, which is 6% of expenditures. If Measure UUT is not approved, the deficit will increase to approximately $1,000,000 next fiscal year. The deficit is caused by the sunset of the 10% UUT which was the tax rate from fiscal years 2009/2010 through 2013/2014. The lost revenue cannot be made up by increases in property tax, sales tax, or other revenue sources. Sierra Madre is now spending reserves that were built through prudent fiscal management and will soon be forced to make severe reductions that will devastate recreational and community service programs, dramatically reduce library hours, compromise maintenance of facilities, and could result in outsourcing of one or more departments such as Police, Paramedic or Library.

The City Council recognizes that our citizens demand the most value for their tax dollars and have successfully implemented cost-cutting initiatives since 2010 that have saved approximately $2,000,000.

The choice is to set the UUT at a 10% rate to preserve our city as we know it, or face devastating cuts where one or more major departments could be outsourced, or public works, public safety and community services are significantly curtailed. If Measure UUT fails, the nature and character of this safe, self-sustaining village will change for the worse.

Only you can keep Sierra Madre the very special community that it is. PLEASE VOTE YES on Measure UUT.

/s/ John Capoccia, Mayor
/s/ Gene Goss, Mayor Pro Tem
/s/ Denise Delmar, Councilmember
/s/ John Harabedian, Councilmember
/s/ Rachelle Arizmendi, Councilmember

REBUTTAL TO THE ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE UUT

The Sponsors of Measure UUT have not justified an increase in the UUT tax rate from 6% to 10%. This 66% UUT tax increase would annually impose $1,000,000 in new taxes on our City’s 11,000 citizens.

Instead of addressing spending in a serious way, the sponsors of Measure UUT are trying to persuade us to vote for more taxes through fear. They want us to believe that without more revenue, our City will be devastated. None of that is true. We will continue to have law enforcement, a library, and other City services. For example, the City currently has before it a proposal that will reduce police service costs by over $700,000 annually while increasing actual patrol hours by 20%. The City has chosen to study that proposal rather than act on it.

The sponsors of the 66% tax increase suggest that since 2010, the City has implemented “cost-cutting initiatives” that have saved the City $2,000,000. That suggestion is false. Any “cost cutting initiatives” have been more than offset by salary increases, the unnecessary retention of consultants to assist City employees in the performance of their duties, and other forms of increased spending.

The end result is that since fiscal year 2012/2013 the City’s general fund expenditures have increased from $7,051,508 to $8,286,216. The City’s request for an additional $1,000,000 in annual taxes would have been entirely unnecessary if it had not chosen to increase annual spending by over $1,200,000. On top of all this, the sponsors of Measure UUT have chosen to hide the fact that the City is anticipating an increase in property tax revenue of $200,000 per year.

City residents have repeatedly voted against UUT tax increases. The City has chosen to ignore those votes. It is now time for the City to listen. Prudent fiscal management is needed. Not new taxes.

Please VOTE NO ON MEASURE UUT.

/s/ Michael Amerio
/s/ Dave Mysza
/s/ Rick De La Mora
ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE UUT
The City Council is attempting to increase the future UUT tax rate by 66%. The rate is scheduled to be 6% effective July, 2016, and the City would like to raise the rate to 10%. The 66% increase equates to increased taxes of $1,000,000 on a City which has a population of approximately 11,000 citizens. We agree that our City needs to improve financially. The way to make change is not through additional taxes, but through prudent spending. Government cannot continue to increase taxes through fear.

The City needs to look at the parts of the budget where change will make a difference. For example, 47% of the City’s general fund budget is allocated to public safety. A proposal has been brought to the City by the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department which will provide projected annual savings in excess of $700,000. The proposal will not only save the City money, but will provide increased security and patrol hours. The City is attempting to raise taxes before consideration of savings in the public safety budget. Savings are available in other departments, but the City has not pursued.

Future tax increases needs to be restricted for a period of time with a defined purpose, or used for improvements to our infrastructure. Our first option should not be a permanent increase in taxes, with the revenue used for general operating expenses.

Change is difficult, we all do it in our personal lives, and our City needs to do the same. We do not need more taxes, our City needs to be fiscally responsible, and spend our money strategically.

Please VOTE NO ON MEASURE UUT. Let’s take a step back, and review our City budget, make the changes necessary, and retain Sierra Madre’s status as the crown jewel of the San Gabriel Valley.

/s/ Michael Amerio
/s/ Dave Mysza
/s/ Rick De La Mora

REBUTTAL TO THE ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE UUT
The authors of the Argument Against Measure UUT are attempting to mislead you. Sierra Madre’s budget was balanced in 2014 with the 10% UUT rate that was in effect at that time. The cause of the projected $1M deficit is the reduction of the UUT. One of the authors argued in 2014 that natural revenue growth would be sufficient to offset the reduction of the UUT to 6%. Predictably, he was dead wrong!

Now, the authors want to force the disbanding of the Sierra Madre Police Department. Your City Council has performed due diligence by commissioning two citizen’s committees – to analyze a preliminary proposal from the Sheriff and to advise the city on revenue. The Sheriff proposal committee recommendation was to keep and fund our own police department, which was overwhelmingly supported by public comment. The recommendation of the revenue committee was to implement a 12% UUT to maintain the current level of services. The City Council is merely proposing to stabilize the budget and sustain existing services with the 10% rate that was recently in effect.

Through tough fiscal discipline your City Council has made $2,000,000 in cuts over the last six years. Essential services are all that is left. If Measure UUT fails, dramatic cuts will be made, which may include outsourcing of police and/or other departments, including the library.

Sierra Madre expects and deserves better! Please join your UNANIMOUS City Council in preserving our beloved Sierra Madre - Vote YES on Measure UUT!

/s/ John Capoccia, Mayor
/s/ Gene Goss, Mayor Pro Tem
ORDINANCE NO. 1369


WHEREAS, the City of Sierra Madre has collected a Utility Users Tax (UUT) since 1993; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, the voters approved a maximum rate of 12%, reducing to 10% on July 1, 2014, to 8% on July 1, 2015 and to 6% on July 1, 2016;

WHEREAS, the City Council determined in 2010 to collect only 10% UUT until the scheduled reduction to 8% occurred on July 1, 2014; and

WHEREAS, the only major sources of general fund revenues, which pay for police, fire and paramedics, library, and community services are property taxes and the UUT; and

WHEREAS, between fiscal year 2011/12 and 2014/15, more than $1.5 million in general fund reductions have occurred resulting in corresponding service level reductions and alternative service delivery; and

WHEREAS, each 1% of UUT revenues collected equals approximately $250,000 of the City’s general fund budget and the reduction in the UUT from 10% to 8% represents a loss of approximately $500,000 annually, resulting in a projected deficit of $529,000 in fiscal year 2015/16; and

WHEREAS, a reduction in UUT to 6% on July 1, 2016 will result in a total reduction of revenues of approximately $900,000 for fiscal year 2016/17, resulting in a projected permanent deficit of $994,000 annually, as measured against the fiscal year 2014/15 budget; and

WHEREAS, since May 2014, the City has convened several budget meetings, community input meetings and town hall study sessions and created a citizen based Revenue Committee to review the current and continuing loss of revenues and impact on essential City services and evaluate options and alternatives; and

WHEREAS, the Revenue Committee has recommended that the City consider a permanent maximum 12% UUT to help stabilize the general fund revenues which pay for essential City services, including police, fire and paramedic services, street maintenance, library services and community services; and

WHEREAS, essential safety services within the City are understaffed, the City’s revenue has not kept pace with its expenses, so that police, fire, paramedics and other employees are paid substantially below their counterparts in comparable jurisdictions, and infrastructure is deteriorating without the funds to make necessary improvements and repairs; and

WHEREAS, the UUT Oversight Committee, which was formed in 2008 to review whether the increased UUT revenue was spent on police, fire and paramedic services, has found that the costs of police, fire and paramedic services exceed the amount of increased revenue collected by UUT at 10% or less, thereby showing that the City does use the UUT to fund public safety services; and

WHEREAS, after much consideration, the City Council reached consensus to support a 10% UUT without a sunset clause as it continues to work on ways to increase the financial stability of the general fund; and

WHEREAS, although some amount of the revenue generated by even a 10% UUT is likely to be lost over time due to market erosion, changing technology and other factors, setting the UUT at 10% will substantially help stabilize the current budget and current level of essential services; and

WHEREAS, given that the UUT collected will continue to be less than the cost of City police, fire and paramedic services, review by an Oversight Committee to determine that the City has directed UUT revenue to pay for public safety services is an unnecessarily use of valuable citizen volunteer time which can be put to better use in the City; and
WHEREAS, the City desires to continue the existing exemption for low income citizens and preserve all other provisions of the UUT Ordinance set forth in Chapter 3.36, unless otherwise amended herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, the People of the City of Sierra Madre do ordain, as follows:

Section 1. Section 3.36.180 (“Utility users tax rate”) is amended to read as follows:

“3.36.180 Utility users tax rate.

Effective July 1, 2016, the taxes imposed by this Chapter shall be at the rate of ten (10) percent, unless a lesser rate is established by the city council on or before August 1st of any year.”

Section 2. Section 3.36.200 (“Exemptions”), Subsection A is amended to read as follows:

3.36.200 Exemptions.

A. Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed as imposing a tax upon:

(1) Any Person or service if imposition of such tax upon that Person or service would be in violation of a federal or California statute, the Constitution of the United States or the Constitution of the State of California;

(2) The City;

(3) Any individual who uses any utility subject to tax under this Ordinance in or upon any premises occupied by a household of which that individual is a member and that qualifies as “very low income” as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s annual survey of income limits for the Public Housing and Section 8 Programs.

Section 3. Section 3.36.230 (“Oversight Committee”) is repealed.

Section 4. Majority Approval. This Ordinance shall be effective only if approved by a majority of the voters voting thereon (50% + 1) and shall go into effect ten (10) days after the vote is declared by the City Council.

Section 5. Severability. If any section, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining sections, sentences, clauses, phrases, or portions of this Ordinance shall nonetheless remain in full force and effect. The people of the City of Sierra Madre hereby declare that they would have adopted each section, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this Ordinance, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, sentences, clauses, phrases, or portions of this Chapter be declared invalid or unenforceable and, to that end, the provisions of this Ordinance are severable.

Section 6. Execution. The Mayor is hereby authorized to attest to the adoption of this Ordinance by signing where indicated below.
NOTICE TO THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED VOTER:

If the polling place is not accessible to the physically handicapped voter, such voter is entitled to vote in one of the following ways:

1. A precinct board member shall take a regular ballot to the physically handicapped person at a place as near as possible to the polling place and which is accessible to such person, qualify that person to vote, and return the voted ballot to the polling place;

2. If it is impractical to vote a regular ballot outside the polling place, please use the attached application and apply for a vote-by-mail ballot.
APPLICATION TO “VOTE BY MAIL”
CITY OF SIERRA MADRE
GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION - TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 2016
To obtain a vote-by-mail ballot, complete the information on this form.
The elections official MUST RECEIVE this application by April 5, 2016.

Print Name: ________________________________ Date of Birth __________________________

Residence Address: ____________________________ (As Registered)
Number and Street ____________________________ City, State, Zip Code ____________________

Mail My Ballot To: ____________________________ (If different from above)
Number and Street ____________________________ City, State, Zip Code ____________________

SIGNATURE

Signature of Applicant (Must be signed to be processed) ____________________________ Date ____________ Daytime Phone No ____________

I have not applied for a vote by mail ballot for this election by any other means. I declare under penalty of perjury under
the laws of the State of California that the information I have provided on this application is true and correct.

POLLS OPEN AT 7 A.M.
AND CLOSE AT 8 P.M.

TAKE THIS SAMPLE BALLOT TO YOUR
POLLLING PLACE FOR REFERENCE

POLLLING PLACE: Your polling place may have changed!

See above for your polling place location.