

**SAVE OUR STREETS (S.O.S.)  
BENICIA CITIZEN’S-DRIVEN INITIATIVE  
TALKING POINTS**

**SUMMARY OF INTIATIVE**

This voter-sponsored measure would authorize an additional transaction and use tax, more commonly known as a sales tax, on retail sales, of ½ cent or 0.5% to every item purchased in the City of Benicia with the exception of certain food items purchased from grocery stores. The use of funds raised by the tax would be limited to repairing, maintaining, and improving the safety and condition of Benicia's streets, roads, potholes, and related sidewalk and storm drains. In addition to improving vehicular safety, revenue generated by the measure is intended to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Funds raised by the tax would not be General Fund monies and could not be used for any other purpose. The 0.5% sales tax would remain in effect until repealed by the voters. The measure also creates a citizen advisory oversight committee and requires annual audits.

**KEY POINTS**

- Citizen’s-Driven Initiative (the City is not involved in this effort).
- 0.5% increase of sales tax (excludes most food items at grocery stores) – this would still result in a sales tax in Benicia that would be lower than many cities in the area. Currently, Benicia’s sales tax rate is 8.375%. :This initiative would increase it to:
  - Benicia – 8.875
  - Vallejo – 9.25
  - Concord – 9.75%
  - Martinez – 9.75%
  - Pleasant Hill – 9.25%
  - Walnut Creek – 9.25%
- Funds WILL NOT go into the City’s General Fund
- Funds CAN NOT be used for anything but improvement to our streets, and related sidewalks and storm drains.
- A 1/2 cent tax should generate around **\$4 million/year**.
- It was previously estimated that it would take \$60 million to bring all our streets up from a failing **PCI (Pavement Condition Index) of 53 to a passing grade of 70**. Costs most likely have increased.
- Including the approximate \$1million/yr. we receive in gas tax money, and the process of collecting tax money, it’s estimated that it will take 15 yrs. to completely fix the streets. Keeping the tax in place after 15 years would allow for ongoing maintenance.
- A Citizen’s Oversight Committee will be formed to oversee the spending of the funds, and an Annual Audit will be conducted to ensure compliance.
- This sales tax increase would remain in effect until repealed by the voters.
- We will need over 2,000 signatures to get this measure on the March 5, 2024 ballot, and we are required to turn these signatures in to the City Clerk by then end of September.

Your signature will assist us in getting this initiative on the March 5, 2024 ballot.

**S.O.S. COMMITTEE**

- MARK HUGHES
- MAGGIE KOLK
- DAVID BATCHELOR
- GLENN LOVEALL
- TIM HAMANN
- KRISTA HEREDIA
- BOBBIE WHITE