

# *memorandum*

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TO: Mayor & City Council

FROM: John Godwin, City Manager

SUBJECT: **ELECTION MAILER**

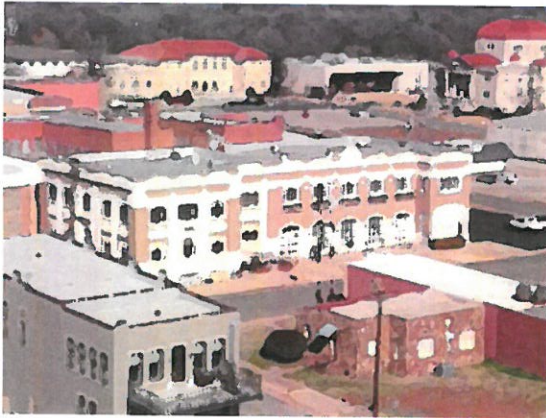
DATE: September 28, 2017

**BACKGROUND:** At its last regular meeting, the city council briefly discussed an educational mailer to be sent out in October to all voters regarding the November 7 sales tax election. The attached draft closely follows the layouts used in 2013 and 2017 prior to bond elections for utility, parks, and street improvements.

**STATUS OF ISSUE:** We want to make sure the mailer is both thorough and accurate, and helps voters fully understand exactly what the proposition will and will not do. The October 9 meeting will give the council one final opportunity to make changes before we begin production and distribution.

**BUDGET:** NA.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Make changes as needed, and authorize publication of the mailer.



# CITY of PARIS

## LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX ELECTION

### Facts You Need To Know

**On Tuesday, November 7, Paris citizens will be asked to vote For or Against changing the existing one-fourth cent economic development sales tax to a road maintenance tax instead.**

#### Background

- The city collects an “extra” sales tax of one-fourth of one cent to promote and encourage economic development in Paris.
- Current economic development sales tax revenue is about \$1.4 million per year.
- These funds are managed by the Paris Economic Development Corporation (PEDC), which also employs a staff of three.
- The Paris City Council approves the PEDC’s annual budget, appoints its board of directors, and is the only entity authorized by state law to grant abatements on property taxes.

#### Proposed Changes

- The November 7 election gives local voters the ability to change the economic development tax to a road maintenance tax.
- If the proposition is approved, economic development will still be funded, but at about \$600,000 per year.
- Any PEDC funds remaining after all liabilities are paid will be set aside for ED purposes only, in an Economic Development Fund.
- Changes would not be immediate, due to restrictions place of state law, but would most likely occur sometime in 2018.

#### Operations

- There will still be a full-time economic development staff, the director reporting to the city manager, per the city charter.
- The ED office will broaden its responsibilities to include all types of economic development needed and appropriate for the city.
- The PEDC board will be replaced by an Economic Development Advisory Board, which will have many of the same responsibilities, but with no control over expenditures or paid employees.

### Road maintenance tax

- State law allows cities to collect up to a quarter-cent sales tax “to maintain and repair municipal streets or sidewalks.”
- The city now budgets about \$600,000 annually for road maintenance materials for this purpose.
- If approved and collected, this new tax would increase this amount to \$1.4 million, or up by approximately \$800,000 per year.
- This money is for maintenance; the recently approved street bonds are for long-term capital costs of road reconstruction.
- The optional road maintenance tax requires voter re-approval every four years.

### VOTING

The following language will appear on your ballot. You will be asked to vote **For** or **Against**:

“The abolition of a sales and use tax for the promotion and development of new and expanded business enterprises at the rate of one-fourth of one percent and the adoption of a local sales and use tax in the City of Paris, Texas at the rate of one-fourth of one percent to provide revenue for maintenance and repair of municipal streets.”

### Early voting

If you wish to vote early, you may do so from October 23 through November 3, except no early voting will be held on Saturdays or Sundays. On October 23-24, early voting by personal appearance will be from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. On October 25-31 and November 3, early voting by personal appearance shall be from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Early voting will occur at the Lamar County Courthouse Annex.

### Election Day

Regular voting occurs Tuesday, November 7, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

### Where to Vote on Election Day

Citywide voting will be held in the Old County Courtroom of the Lamar County Courthouse Annex, located at 231 Lamar Avenue. You may also vote by mail. To do so, request a ballot from: Tricia Johnson; Lamar County Elections Administrator; 231 Lamar Avenue; Paris, Texas 75460.