

WHAT IS MEASURE E?

By Jazmin Alvarado, News Editor

The old iteration of the measure would have been a 0.2% sales tax in Fresno County and could have generated Fresno State around \$36 million annually for 20 years. The measure needed a simple majority vote to pass, but 52.86% of Fresno County voters rejected the measure while 47.14% voted "YES."

The new iteration of Measure E would impose a 1 cent sales tax (a 0.25% sales tax) on a \$4 purchase in Fresno County. Backers of the tax measure claim it will generate around \$1.6 billion for Fresno State over a 25-year period.

Measure E 2022: \$36,000,000 (projected revenue) multiplied by 20 (years, duration of the measure) equals \$720,000,000 generated for Fresno State by the end of its timeline.

Measure E 2024: \$1,600,000,000 (projected total revenue) divided by 25 (years, duration of the Measure) equals \$64,000,000 per year to be generated for Fresno State in the updated version.

The 2024 iteration has a \$28 million a year increase in revenue compared to the 2022 version of the measure.

DRAFT?

As of now, everything that is said in the measure is a draft. There are no set phases or specific projects that are already in place.

The list, that can be found on the full text of the measure, states that the passing of the measure will include "...expanding access in nursing, agriculture, criminology, science, engineering and other fields..."

"So when you look at the list, the list is a draft," said Fresno State President Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval during an interview with The Collegian. "The Measure E committee asked us, Fresno State, if you had \$1.5 billion, what would be the most pressing needs that you would address with this money?"

Another part of that list states "... providing safe drinking water; removing asbestos, lead paint and mold..."

There are 35 water bottle fill up stations on campus that students, faculty and staff use. The water that is used for the refill stations come from three different wells located on campus that pump groundwater.

Kenneth Schmidt, hydrogeologist and Fresno State alum, has worked with Fresno State before by consulting on older wells. He assessed the list of contaminants with The Collegian and confirmed that the water is safe to drink.

The maximum level allowed (MCL) is the scale that is used to determine the amount of contaminants in the water. If it goes above, that would be cause for concern.

"For nitrate as nitrogen the MCL is 10 and the value is 2.8, so it's way below the 10," Schmidt said.

Lauren Nickerson, associate vice president of University Communications, said that the water reference in the commercials was more about continuing to ensure that Fresno State has safe drinking water and adequate domestic wells.

77% of the buildings at Fresno State are more than 30 years old while 62% are more than 60 years old.

Jiménez-Sandoval said that buildings on campus do have asbestos but they're contained, and can be activated

through shaking or disrupted by construction.

"So it could be for example, that this wall, which is not the case, right, has asbestos within the second or third layer of the wall, but not the top layer," Jiménez-Sandoval said.

He followed up by stating that if they wanted to remove the asbestos it would have to go through a "long arduous safety driven process," but they don't have the means to do that.

WHAT IS THE TWO-MILE RADIUS?

The measure also includes something called the "improvement zone."

This would be bounded by a 2-mile radius around the campus' physical boundaries and similar boundaries around any additional locations within Fresno County. These locations may be owned or leased during the time of the ordinance by the California State University, according to the full text of the measure.

So what would be built within that 2-mile radius? Jiménez-Sandoval said that the answer to that would be dorms.

He shared that they would have to build a significant amount of dorm spaces at an affordable price to accommodate through the rise of rental rates.

Yet, within the proximity of the 2-miles there are not many empty plots of land available for housing developments.

"They're [plots of land] not empty.

0.25 PERCENT SALES TAX ON A \$4 PURCHASE IN FRESNO COUNTY.

PROJECTED TOTAL REVENUE WOULD BE \$1.6 BILLION

THE MONEY WILL BE OVERSEEN BY A COMMITTEE OF SEVEN APPOINTED MEMBERS.

"IMPROVEMENT ZONE" WILL BE BOUNDED BY A 2-MILE RADIUS

They don't have to be empty," Jiménez-Sandoval said.

When asked if Fresno State could buy a strip mall and convert that to dorms he said: "That's right."

Miguel Arias, Fresno State alum and councilmember for District 3, shared his thoughts regarding the 2-mile radius saying that it's a poison pill stemming from private interest and allowing them to not spend money on the actual campus.

"I think those who are funding this initiative will be determining what happens in a two mile radius. And it would be to their benefit specifically. You know that the campus is not two miles, you know what that would fund a freeway interchange that would find a new commercial strip. That would have been a new hotel," Arias told The Collegian.

OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Jiménez-Sandoval said that there would be a tier level in place to decide how the funds are distributed. The first group would be comprised of 16 or 17 of students, faculty, staff and possibly some community members; the second would be the oversight committee; the third would be the Board of Trustees.

The first group is not written into the measure and is "optional," said Arias.

The oversight committee will be required to meet four times a year and is made up of seven appointed members. The Fresno County Board of Supervisors will appoint five, Fresno State's Office of the Chancellor

will appoint one and the Office of the University President will appoint one.

"On an annual basis, up to 1% of the proceeds of the tax deposited in the Fund shall be appropriated to the County for the costs of administering the provisions of this Chapter, including County staffing or staffing retained by the Citizens' Oversight Committee and other related administrative costs," the measure states.

That would accumulate to a minimum of \$80,000 annually for the oversight committee, which for the 25 years would be around \$2 million. For reference, the members of the Measure Z oversight committee meet twice a month and get paid \$0.

\$14,000,000 (amount of money that would go towards the salaries of the committee) /25(years) = \$560,000 per year

\$560,000/7 (appointed members) = \$80,000

Jim Patterson, assemblymember for District 8, has been promised a position in the board, according to Arias.

"In 14 years, Jim [Patterson] has not brought one penny to Fresno State. So now he wants us to bail him out by passing a sales tax. Jim Patterson has been promised an appointment to the committee that would pay him \$80,000 For the next 25 years, if this tax passes. It's self interest," Arias said.

OPINIONS?

There have been split opinions regarding the measure.

Manjot Dhanda, a senior majoring in electrical engineering, said that the university does need some major improvements but doesn't think a sales tax is the way to go.

"I feel like raising taxes, especially for college students, is extremely unfair," Dhanda said. "Most college students devote most of their time to school, which results in little to no room for working or for themselves."

Tim Orman, campaign consultant and former chief of staff to former Mayor Lee Brand and Mayor Dyer, shared in an interview with The Collegian how the construction; such as the \$350 million in deferred maintenance, would benefit from this.

"Measure E will provide Fresno State with consistent and stable funding for deferred maintenance, health and safety repairs and capital construction. Which should improve planning and avoid most of the issues associated with the current campus construction," Orman said.

Fresno County voters will decide for a second time on the tax-increase measure to fund Fresno State on Tuesday, March 5.

WHO IS SUPPORTING THE MEASURE?

- Mayor of Fresno Jerry Dyer
- Fresno County Sheriff John Zanon
- Former Mayor of Fresno and Current state assembly member Jim Patterson
- Fresno County Supervisor Sal Quintero
- Fresno City Councilmember Tyler Maxwell

WHO OPPOSES THE MEASURE?

- Fresno City Councilmember Miguel Arias
- Fresno City Councilmember Gary Bredefeld