This measure was placed on the ballot by the City Council.

This measure would authorize a special parcel tax of $0.1047 per square foot of improvements (i.e., buildings or structures erected or affixed to the land) for each parcel of real property in the City of Berkeley, for the purpose of funding firefighter and emergency medical response, upgrades to the 9-1-1 dispatch system, hazard mitigation, and wildfire prevention and preparedness activities. The City Council may increase the tax annually by the increase in the local cost of living or the per capita personal income growth in the state, whichever is greater.

The tax would not apply to

- parcels and improvements exempt from taxation by the City pursuant to state or federal law
- property owned by individuals who qualify as “very low-income,” as may be established by resolution of the City Council.

The measure shall pass if approved by two-thirds of the voters voting on this measure and would go into effect on January 1, 2021. It would remain in effect until repealed by the voters. Alternatively, the City Council could, without voter approval, reduce or eliminate the tax, add or modify exemptions, or amend it in any way that does not increase the tax.

Financial implications

The tax is estimated to generate $8.5 million annually. The proceeds shall be placed in a special fund to be used only for the following:

- Local firefighter and emergency medical response including hiring and training personnel and upgrading safety equipment and facilities.
- Upgrading and modernizing the 9-1-1 dispatch system to implement and maintain a system to provide emergency medical dispatching.
- Wildfire prevention and preparedness activities including, but not limited to, vegetation management, hazard mitigation, public education, evacuation planning, and an emergency alert system.

The above statement is an impartial analysis of Measure FF.

s/FARIMAH BROWN
Berkeley City Attorney