



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR  
June 24, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager  
Submitted by: Henry Oyekanmi, Director, Finance Department  
David Sprague, Fire Chief, Fire Department  
Subject: FY 2026 Tax Rate: Fund Firefighting, Emergency Medical Response and Wildfire Prevention (Measure FF)

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt first reading of an Ordinance setting the FY 2026 tax rate for funding Firefighting, Emergency Medical Response and Wildfire Prevention (Measure FF) in the City of Berkeley at the annual tax rate of \$0.1299 (12.99 cents) per square foot of improvements.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The tax levy rate of the recommended \$0.1299 per square foot of improvements is projected to yield approximately \$10,969,060 in revenues.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The FY 2025 tax rate of \$0.1220 is being adjusted by the Personal Income Growth in California of 6.44% based on Berkeley Municipal Code 7.83.020 as adopted by the City Council under Ordinance No. 7,745-N.S. on June 16, 2020. Measure FF is a special parcel tax for firefighting, emergency medical response and wildfire prevention that limits the annual tax rate based on the greater of the increase in the cost of living in the immediate San Francisco Bay Area or per capita Personal Income Growth in California. It is estimated that the tax will cost taxpayers the following amounts for FY 2026, as compared with FY 2025:

Square Feet	FY 2026	FY 2025
1,200	\$155.88	\$ 146.40
1,500	194.85	183.00
1,900	246.81	231.80
3,000	389.70	366.00
3,900	506.61	475.80
10,000	1299.00	1,220.00

**BACKGROUND**

Measure FF authorized a special parcel tax 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.

In 2008, voters passed Measure GG to stop fire stations from being closed and services from being reduced, in the context of a major economic downturn. Measure GG designated the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission a formal oversight role, the duties of which are replicated, with respect to Measure FF, through the passage of this Council item.

Now, with rising challenges from climate change and fires, bigger demands on our emergency services, and the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, Measure FF was placed on the November 2020 ballot by a unanimous vote of the City Council and it was approved by voters, to provide funds to modernize the City's 9-1-1 dispatch system, upgrade equipment, hire additional paramedics, improve emergency alert systems and continue to clear fire fuels, among other things.

The effective date for this tax was January 1, 2021. The City will raise approximately \$10,969,060 for FY 2026.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS**

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

**CONTACT PERSON**

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David Sprague, Fire Chief, (510) 981-5500

Attachments:

1: Ordinance

ORDINANCE NO. #,###-N.S.

SETTING THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 SPECIAL TAX RATE TO FUND FIREFIGHTING, EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE AND WILDFIRE PREVENTION (MEASURE FF) IN THE CITY OF BERKELEY

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Berkeley as follows:

Section 1. The FY 2026 tax rate to provide for the costs incurred for the firefighting, emergency medical response and wildfire prevention (Measure FF) is set at 0.1299 per square foot of improvements.

Section 2. The cost to taxpayers during FY 2026 will be \$155.88 for a 1,200 square foot dwelling and \$389.70 for a 3,000 square foot dwelling.

Section 3. This tax rate will result in estimated total collections of \$10,969,060.

Section 4. Copies of this Ordinance shall be posted for two days prior to adoption in the display case located near the walkway in front of the Maudelle Shirek Building, 2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Within 15 days of adoption, copies of this Ordinance shall be filed at each branch of the Berkeley Public Library and the title shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation.

