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What you should know about the infrastructure sales surtax.

1. What is an infrastructure surtax?

A voter-approved one percent sales tax used to invest in local infrastructure improvements, such as public safety, roads, sidewalks, parks, libraries and schools. Proceeds may not be used to pay for operating expenses.

2. Is this a new tax?

No, it is an extension on the current penny sales tax that funds capital improvement program projects, such as new roads and schools. A substantial portion is generated by non-residents.

3. What does this tax apply to?

The one-cent sales surtax applies to the first \$5,000 of any purchase that is subject to the state sales tax.

4. How long has Sarasota County had an infrastructure sales surtax?

In 1989, Sarasota County voters first authorized the one percent sales tax and have extended it twice since then, in 1997 and 2007.

5. How is the infrastructure sales tax used?

Every penny collected goes toward infrastructure improvements in the county. One-quarter of the revenue is allocated to the Sarasota County School District. The remaining 75% is distributed among Sarasota County, the cities of North Port, Sarasota and Venice, and the Town of Longboat Key, based on population.

6. When does the current surtax expire?

The current tax will expire Dec. 31, 2024.

7. If a continuation is approved, how long will this tax be in effect?

Sarasota County voters will have an opportunity in November 2022 to continue the tax for another 15 years, from 2025-2039.

8. How is a sales tax different from a property tax?

Property taxes (ad valorem) are assessed based on property ownership. Sales taxes are generated from monetary transactions/purchases made in Sarasota County. Tourists and visitors to Sarasota County help support county infrastructure services through a sales tax.

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9. Are there items exempt from the sales tax?

Yes. There are a number of exemptions. For a full listing, view Florida Statute 212.08 at <https://bit.ly/3x0TOvZ>.

10. Can revenue from the surtax be used to fund operating expenses such as staff?

No. The revenue can be used to build a library, for example, but cannot be used to pay for operating or maintaining the library, or for library staff.

11. Will the project list be permanent, or can it change?

The project list may change over time. If surtax revenues vary significantly from the forecast, or if community priorities change, the project list may be amended. Any changes would be preceded by a public hearing and vote by elected officials.

12. Who gets to vote for the surtax?

All registered voters in Sarasota County will have the opportunity to vote for the surtax extension in the 2022 general election.

13. Who decides on the projects that are built from surtax funding?

The elected bodies of Sarasota County Government, municipalities and School Board will decide the list of projects based on feedback from staff and the community.

14. What future projects will these tax dollars fund?

A list of potential projects is currently in development and will be posted on sarasotacountysurtax.net. The official list of projects approved by the elected bodies will be posted on the website by April 2022.

15. Can the public provide input on projects?

Yes. Find times, dates and locations for public meetings and workshops at sarasotacountysurtax.net (Calendar & Resources).

Find more project information, resources, and a public meeting and workshop calendar at sarasotacountysurtax.net.

