

May 12, 2026
City Council Meeting

Written Public Comments

General Public Comment

From: Janice Brownfield [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2026 5:08 PM
To: City Council Public Comment
Subject: Public Comment Non-Agenda Item

Sustainability of our City's finances and environment is vital for our future and for those who come after us. The Inaugural Treasury Townhall to be hosted by the City Treasurer on May 13 at 6:30 p.m. at St. John's Walker Hall is expected to feature a proposed 1% sales tax increase for which the deadline to be on the ballot for the 11/3 election is 7/14. As the townhall announcement proclaims, "Responsible stewardship today builds a stronger, more vibrant Orange for tomorrow." We are the stewards of our finances as well as our environment,

One revenue source recently implemented is parking meters, meant to improve the City's financial situation that will also help reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions — improving our air quality. The meters can also incentivize "more sustainable transportation choices. By creating turnover, they reduce the time drivers spend circling for spots, which lowers emissions." It is estimated that "30% of urban congestion is caused by drivers searching for parking. . . Higher costs for parking can act as a deterrent to driving personal vehicles" and choosing instead to walk and use public transportation.

Trolleys as public transportation, like in Laguna Beach, would likewise help the environment and also benefit residents and visitors. The free trolley system in Laguna Beach is primarily funded by a \$5.2 million grant from the Orange County Transportation Authority over a seven-year period from 2024 to 2031. The City of Laguna Beach covers operating costs beyond the grant, which includes a local match requirement of about 10% for the service. Another OCTA grant of \$2 million is for the City's free hybrid electric on-demand ride sharing program for residents which had more than 63,000 boardings in one year.

As stewards of our environment, the City's participation in the OC River Walk project improvements along the Santa Ana River will "reduce heat island effects, filter storm water, restore habitat, and create a functional green space that promotes recreation, active transportation, and public health." The \$1,472,000 grant from the State Coastal Conservancy is for the design phase of the Upland Habitat Restoration Project, a component of the larger OC River Walk project. The City can apply for a similar grant for improving the land along Santiago Creek.

Item 9.1

Consider revenue measurers to address ongoing structural General Fund deficits and provide direction for the November 2026 General Municipal Election



CITY OF ORANGE
CITY CLERK
2026 MAY 12 PM 12: 06

May 11, 2026

Honorable Mayor Dan Slater
Honorable Members of the City Council
City of Orange
300 E. Chapman Ave.
Orange, CA 92866

RE: Orange City Council for May 12, 2026 Agenda Item No. 9.1

Dear Mayor Slater and Members of the City Council:

At its regular meeting for May 12, 2026, the Orange City Council is scheduled to consider various measures to increase revenues in an effort to manage the City's structural deficit and return to a position of financial health. While fiscal management is critical for the long-term success of a well-functioning public agency, we caution the City Council against recurring to certain revenue enhancement measures, including burdensome tax increases.

Such actions risk exerting unsustainable pressure on the residential and business communities. It is these same communities where the City's revenue comes from. Any negative effects that drives businesses away or reduces the economic purchasing power of the City's residents could eliminate any benefit the City may realize from raising taxes.

Certain tax increases identified in the Staff Report for Agenda Item 9.1 are of particular concern: Items including vacant property taxes and documentary transfer taxes have particularly negative effect on utilization and transaction of local properties.

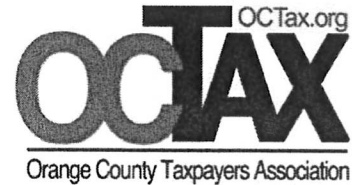
At a minimum, tax increases of any kind should be met with and matched with other actions including managing departmental budgets and reallocating limited resources to where they are most needed.

On behalf of licensed real estate agents and brokers living and working in the City of Orange – and on behalf of the countless residents and business supported by real estate professionals – we urge not to proceed with burdensome taxation measures as outlined in the Staff Report but rather look toward other measures for proper fiscal management with City resources that also supports the local community.

Sincerely,
DocuSigned by:
Sarah Ireland
2952FE778CCB4A6...
Sarah Ireland
2026 President

CITY OF ORANGE
CITY CLERK

2026 MAY 12 PM 4: 21



May 12, 2026

Mayor Dan Slater & City Council Members
City of Orange
300 E. Chapman Avenue
Orange, CA 92866

RE: Opposition to Proposed Vacant Property Tax and Registry

Dear Mayor Slater and Council Members,

The Orange County Taxpayers Association is the only countywide organization solely focused on representing taxpayers on governmental tax and spending policy issues. Our mission is to ensure taxes and tax-supported programs are fair, understandable, equitable, cost-effective, and supportive of a strong local economy.

OC Tax respectfully submits this letter in opposition to Item 9.1 on the May 12, 2026 agenda regarding the proposed Vacant Property Tax and Vacant Property Registry.

We understand the City of Orange is facing serious fiscal challenges and that the Council is evaluating a variety of proposals to address those concerns. While OC Tax is not categorically opposed to all taxes or revenue measures, we strongly believe any proposal considered by the City should be fair, practical, enforceable, and equitable for residents, businesses, and property owners alike.

In this case, we believe the proposed Vacant Property Tax and Registry fails to meet that standard.

The proposal relies on an arbitrary and difficult-to-enforce definition of "vacancy" while creating significant unanswered questions regarding inherited properties, probate situations, temporary relocations, renovations, and future property planning decisions.

Additionally, the registry itself raises concerns related to privacy, administrative costs, enforcement burdens, and the potential for unintended consequences, including increased risks associated with publicly identifying vacant properties.

The City already possesses existing code enforcement and nuisance abatement tools to address genuinely problematic properties. Creating an entirely new tax structure and administrative bureaucracy is unlikely to effectively solve the issues identified in the proposal and may instead create additional costs and burdens that ultimately impact the broader housing market.

We understand the difficult position the City Council and staff are in and recognize the effort being made to responsibly address Orange's financial challenges. However, we respectfully urge the Council to reject this proposal and instead pursue solutions that do not expand bureaucracy or impose new burdens on residents, businesses, and property owners.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erik Weigand".

Erik Weigand
President
Orange County Taxpayers Association

Orange County Taxpayers Association - PO Box 5881 Orange, CA 92863



1601 E. Orangewood Avenue, Suite 125
Anaheim, CA 92805
(714) 245-9500

May 11, 2026

Mayor Dan Slater & City Council Members
City of Orange
300 E. Chapman Avenue
Orange, CA 92866

RE: Opposition to Proposed Vacant Property Tax and Registry

Dear Mayor Slater and Council Members,

The Apartment Association of Orange County (AAOC) is the professional trade association that represents approximately 2,000 rental housing professionals who own, operate, and service more than 125,000 apartment and single-family rental units and employ more than 10,000 people in Orange and Riverside Counties. AAOC is committed to ensuring a safe, secure, and growing real estate market for all participants in the multifamily rental industry – and their residents.

We are writing to express strong opposition to the proposed Vacant Property Tax identified in Item 9.1 of the May 12, 2026 city council agenda. The notion of taxing vacant properties – meaning units that are non-revenue generating – is perplexing. Further, creating a registration program to identify vacant units stands to diminish the safety of everyone’s neighborhoods. We strongly urge you to reject these proposals.

VACANT PROPERTY REGISTRY

The staff report indicates an intention to bring forward a vacant unit registry program in the coming weeks. Rental registries have repeatedly proven to be expensive to administer, unnecessary for city operations, and risky due to the creation of safety concerns that the city must then address:

- Such registries are subject to Public Record Act requests.
- Units that are exposed become potential targets for squatters or criminal enterprises.
- Squatters, once established, become problematic for neighbors and the neighborhood.
- Squatters take viable rental units off the market until they can be evicted – often taking 6-9 months in California.
- Squatters don’t pay rent and create hardships for the property owner on upkeep and security.
- Registries are time-consuming and expensive for both the city and the property owner to maintain – and they take financial resources away from the units and the residents, as well.
- Registries are typically funded by placing an additional fee on each unit – for which at least some of the cost is passed on to the tenants, making housing even less affordable.

This proposed registry is an expensive, unnecessary, and problematic endeavor that other Orange County cities have rejected as they learn about the liabilities, problems, and affordability concerns they bring.

Apartment Association of Orange County
Opposition to Proposed Vacant Property Tax & Registry
2/3

VACANT PROPERTY TAX

The fact that the city of Oakland is the model being used for this proposal should be reason enough why the Orange City Council should not consider pursuing this policy. What right thinking city would ever say, “We should be more like Oakland.” Outside of that glaringly obvious shortfall in this policy, there are other obvious issues that should be addressed:

- The proposal is to tax properties that aren’t “occupied” according to an arbitrary definition, nearly impossible oversight, and zero ability to enforce the policy.
- The proposal fails to answer some very basic scenarios:
 - o What about people who move away for long-term assignments?
 - o What about properties going through probate?
 - o What about people who are holding on to family properties?
 - o What about properties whose future use is being considered?

Additionally, the stated purpose of such a tax would be:

- 1) “Discourage long-term vacancies” – it’s the property owner’s right to use the property as they see fit for their purposes – so long as the property does not become a nuisance.
- 2) “Promote productive use of land and buildings” - if property taxes are being paid, then it is a productive use of the land and buildings.
- 3) “Reduce neighborhood blight” - cities already have a mechanism to address this through code enforcement. An additional tax won’t make that any more viable.
- 4) “Encourage economic activity and housing availability” - again, this inserts the city in between the property owner and their free and legal use of their own property.

If the city’s goal is to keep up the look of the community – then empower code enforcement.

The city should also look to other cities beyond Oakland that have recently addressed similar proposals:

- In 2023, the city of Adelanto put forth a similar proposal – the voters rejected it by a 2:1 margin.
- In 2024, the city of South Lake Tahoe put forth a similar proposal – the voters rejected it by a similar margin.
- Currently, the city of San Diego is considering a similar proposal – and is pitting property owners against the public employee unions in a ballot initiative fight that will end up costing tens of millions of dollars.

While we understand the difficult and challenging financial position that the city of Orange presently finds itself, it seems imprudent to create a whole new bureaucracy and implement a tax on property usage under the guise of “reducing neighborhood blight” when there are already ample opportunities for the city to address these problems under existing systems.

Apartment Association of Orange County
Opposition to Proposed Vacant Property Tax & Registry
3/3

We strongly encourage the city council to reject this proposal and focus on revenue streams that do not necessitate the creation of a new bureaucratic process or burden its residents and businesses with funding it.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David J. Cordero". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

David J. Cordero
Executive Director

Orange City Council

Meeting Time: 05-12-26 18:00

eComments Report

Meetings	Meeting Time	Agenda Items	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Orange City Council	05-12-26 18:00	52	2	1	0	1

Orange City Council

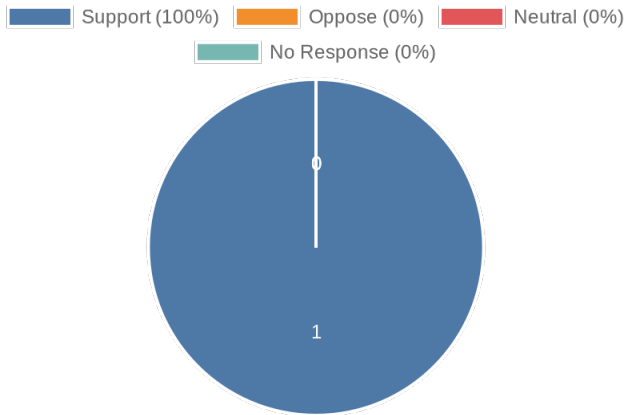
05-12-26 18:00

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
2. PUBLIC COMMENTS At this time, members of the public may address the Council on matters not listed on the agenda within the subject matter jurisdiction of the City Council, provided that NO action may be taken on off-agenda items unless authorized by law. Public Comments are limited to three (3) minutes per speaker unless a different time limit is announced.	1	1	0	0
8.3. Public Hearing to discuss and consider a draft City Charter	1	0	0	1

Agenda Item: eComments for 2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

At this time, members of the public may address the Council on matters not listed on the agenda within the subject matter jurisdiction of the City Council, provided that NO action may be taken on off-agenda items unless authorized by law. Public Comments are limited to three (3) minutes per speaker unless a different time limit is announced.

Overall Sentiment



Adrienne Gladson

Location:

Submitted At: 10:33pm 05-11-26

Costco is open to new ideas too. I read all about this project last summer. But its opening is scheduled for late June/July. I share this not to suggest Council or staff isn't aware of it. In fact, MV will be the home to the gas station while Lake Forest is getting the warehouse. Both cities get the benefits. Very smart. But its timely as you discuss the long-term economic needs to ensure our future tonight. Sharing the links to various media outlets that covered the story in March. As a Costco gas buyer (buying mainly in Fullerton and Tustin-El Camino locations, having a stand alone station in Orange is a goal we could achieve. It needs so much less land than a warehouse and a gas station (17 acres) does. I suggest all property sites that fit this size is worth considering for this purpose. Sharing these links below:

<https://kfiam640.iheart.com/content/2026-03-19-costcos-first-standalone-gas-station-coming-to-mission-viejo/>

According to Supermarket News, the station will be located at 25732 El Paseo in Mission Viejo, roughly 49 miles southeast of Los Angeles. City spokesman Robert Schick confirmed Costco plans to open the location to the public by the end of July 2026.

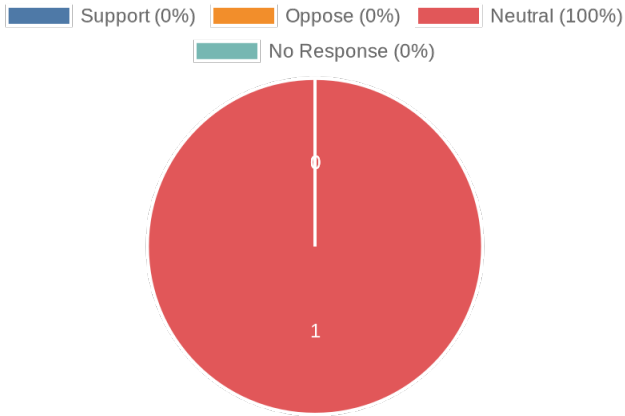
The facility will span more than 17,000 square feet and feature 40 (20 pumps) fueling positions, making it Costco's largest fuel facility to date. Like all Costco fuel locations, the station will be available to members only. The gas station will occupy 3.28 acres.

Adrienne J. Gladson, AICP

What does Orange want to be?

Agenda Item: eComments for 8.3. Public Hearing to discuss and consider a draft City Charter

Overall Sentiment



Adrienne Gladson

Location:

Submitted At: 10:39am 05-12-26

I am open to learning about this idea. But to rush it thru for this election cycle isn't wise. If we do it, it needs a broad, independent committee to do the non-political work on this. It's very complex and needs to be understood by everyone. The draft charter terms are a starting point for consideration but it needs in depth study. For example, I support a lifetime band. I do not support changing the size of the Council or existence of the city being in 6 districts. We cannot return to voters be deluded by the powerful and connected. In fact, I would make the band retroactive to include all the total years of service on the Council ever. It means none of you would be eligible run in Mayor or Council in 2028 or beyond. Recycling would end and new voices would join the Council. It's best to not have Council decide this because of how it looks. If this is a good idea, which I am open to consider, it has to be done without any of you receiving it benefits. Plus, I recommend the better path is to work through appointed non-political commission/ad hoc committee toward placing this on the 2028 ballot so all voters to participate.