



GET THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE

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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Fall 2018 Municipal Election Results

November 7, 2018, Denver, CO – Yesterday, voters in more than 80 cities and towns across Colorado spoke out on a combined total of more than 150 municipal tax issues and other questions. Nearly 20 of these municipalities also had candidate elections. The following results are unofficial and subject to change.

Governance

Castle Pines voters took a step toward increased local control by approving the formation of a home rule charter commission. **Green Mountain Falls** voters selected to reduce the number of trustees from six to four, and **Fort Morgan** voters decided to amend the charter to designate the chief of police as an appointed official reporting directly to the city council. Voters in **Victor** declined to make the office of the city clerk appointed rather than elected.

Broadband

Eight municipalities requested and received permission to provide or partner to provide broadband services: **Aurora, Blue River, Cañon City, Erie, Florence, Fountain, Las Animas, and Wheat Ridge**. This election brings the total of cities and towns that have received voter authorization to 101.

Marijuana

Aurora voters approved medical marijuana cultivation and manufacturing, and rejected a tax on medical marijuana sales. **Delta's** voters split the four questions on their ballots: medical marijuana sales and related establishments were approved, while retail marijuana sales and related establishments were rejected.

In **Palmer Lake**, a question to allow retail marijuana sales was denied, though a marijuana sales tax was approved should sales be approved in the future. Similarly, **Bayfield** voters said no to both medical and retail establishments while also approving a tax on retail sales. **Las Animas** voters approved medical and retail marijuana sales, cultivation, manufacturing, and testing facilities, but did not approve a marijuana sales tax. **Hudson** voters said no to retail marijuana sales and a retail marijuana sales tax, while **Saguache** voters rejected both retail and medical marijuana establishments as well as a special marijuana tax.

Marijuana taxes were approved in **Moffat, Northglenn, and Snowmass Village**, while voters in **Nunn** agreed to amend the town's marijuana tax code to conform to state statute.

Revenue retention

Hot Sulphur Springs voters agreed to exempt the town from the statutory 5.5% limitation on property tax, though the same question failed in **Lochbuie**. **Olathe** voters chose to exempt the town from all revenue limitations, and **Rockvale's** voters approved a similar measure expiring in 2027.

Boulder received permission to retain all revenue from a 2016 sugar-sweetened beverage tax, and **Wheat Ridge** will be able to retain all revenue from a 2016 sales and use tax to fund capital projects. **Lakewood's** request to be exempt from TABOR revenue limitations through 2025 to pay for open space, public safety, and infrastructure also was approved.

Tax and bond issues

Lodging taxes passed in **Grand Junction** and **Green Mountain Falls**, but failed in **Buena Vista**, **Cañon City**, **Hudson**, and **Gilcrest**. **Ouray** received authorization to change its method of levying the existing lodging tax, while **Glendale** received authorization to reallocate a portion of its revenues.

Both **Boulder** and **Lafayette** voters approved an oil and gas pollution tax.

Cities and towns asking tax questions to fund public safety and roads saw mixed results. **Central City** voters approved a sales tax for public safety and emergency services, and **Glenwood Springs** voters approved a property tax increase for the same. Voters in **Federal Heights** and **Frederick** turned down sales tax requests to fund public safety and emergency services. **Del Norte** and **Mead's** requested sales tax increases to fund public safety and roads also failed, as did sales tax increases for roads in **Evans**, **Kersey**, **Kiowa**, and **Pitkin**. **Rockvale** was granted a property tax increase for road improvements, and **Greeley's** two sales tax extensions were also approved, one for public safety, and one for transportation and infrastructure.

Voters in **Durango** declined a mill levy increase and additional sales and use tax to fund public safety and infrastructure improvements.

Berthoud and **Georgetown** received permission for sales tax increases to fund parks and recreation improvements, while **Delta's** voters said no to a similar request. In addition to the new tax that was approved, Berthoud received authorization to re-allocate an existing sales tax to fund parks, recreation, open space, and trails.

Steamboat Springs voters were split on their two tax questions: They approved an extension of a sales and use tax for public education and defeated a new sales and use tax to support air carriers in providing flights to the region.

Of the four sales tax questions on **Denver's** ballot, three passed: to fund parks and open space, to provide healthy food and food-based education to children, and to fund mental health services and treatment. The one tax rejected by Denver voters was to fund scholarships and support services for college students.

Use taxes were approved in **Black Hawk**, **Fleming**, and **Minturn**.

Other tax questions approved include **Avon's** request for a sales tax on tobacco and nicotine products, **Parachute's** request for an excise tax on industrial hemp, and **Cripple Creek's** request to extend a sales tax to support a local nonprofit community foundation and resource center.

Debt authority was granted in:

- **Arvada** - \$79.8 million for roads
- **Dinosaur** - \$299,000 for wastewater improvements
- **Fleming** - \$3 million for sanitation
- **Longmont** - \$16.4 million for city buildings, \$9.58 million for fire station renovations, and \$6.8 million for recreation capital improvements

Berthoud voters rejected a request for \$30 million in debt for parks and recreation capital projects, and **Sterling** voters rejected a request for \$37 million in debt for wastewater capital improvements.

Of **Telluride's** three questions on the ballot, all to fund and finance affordable housing, two passed: a property tax increase of 2 mills and authorization for \$8.1 million in debt to be paid by that property tax. The combined request for a sales and use tax increase and authorization for \$12 million in debt failed.

Historically, municipalities have passed a majority of the TABOR-related questions that have been asked, with a 61% approval rate of tax questions, 69% approval rate for debt questions, and 86% approval rate for revenue retention questions since voter approval was first required in 1993. This year shows a similar trend of voters saying yes to local TABOR questions more often than not: 56% of tax questions were approved, 78% of debt questions were approved, and 86% of revenue retention questions were approved.

Publication requirements

To save money on publication costs, **Bayfield**, **Green Mountain Falls**, and **Lochbuie** were authorized to publish ordinances by title only, and to no longer publish the bills list or contracts awarded in a newspaper. **Jamestown** voters approved, and **Rockvale** voters denied, requests to no longer publish the bills list and contracts awarded. **Parachute** was granted permission to post notices of ordinances on the town website rather than the newspaper.

Election changes

Golden voters did not approve a question allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in municipal elections.

Granby and **Hot Sulphur Springs** voters approved moving their regular town elections to November of even-numbered years, while **Gunnison** voters selected to move their election to November of odd years. **Aspen** voters also decided to move their elections, currently held in May, to March of odd years.

Boulder voters approved changes in the petition, signature verification, and initiative, referendum, and recall processes.

Denver voters approved implementing changes regarding Clerk and Recorder employee appointments, the number of signatures required for an initiative or referendum, and contribution limits and the creation of a Fair Elections Fund for candidates.

Charter amendments

Aurora, **Boulder**, **Broomfield**, **Central City**, **Dacono**, **Denver**, **Parachute**, and **Steamboat Springs** voters approved updates to their home rule charters. **Littleton** voters denied four updates to the charter related to council qualifications, city attorney appointment, municipal judge appointment, and revocable licenses, but approved an update providing for executive sessions as allowed under state law. In **Edgewater**, voters approved a charter change related to council absences, but denied changes related to the election commission and filling council vacancies.

Voters in **Castle Rock** approved several charter amendments to support the implementation of the previously approved change to a Mayor elected at-large. **Dacono** voters declined to offer compensation to the appointed members of boards and commissions or to increase pay of elected officials. **Aspen** voters said no to updates regarding city enterprise borrowing and the granting of a franchise.

Other issues

Other issues decided include:

- **Aspen** – advisory vote for location of city offices
- **Aurora** – rejected the continuation of a photo red light enforcement program
- **Berthoud** – approved a 6.259 acre annexation
- **Dacono** – rejected inclusion in High Plains Library District
- **Delta** – approved two separate questions for sale of city owned property
- **Fairplay** – approved dissolution of the sanitation district
- **Fort Morgan** – approved conveyance of property interest to school district
- **Hotchkiss** – approved sale of town owned property
- **Morrison** – rejected rezoning of 345 acres
- **Olathe** – approved sale of town owned property
- **Pitkin** – approved prohibition of short term rentals in residential districts

CML is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established in 1923 and represents the interests of 270 cities and towns. For more information on the Colorado Municipal League, please visit www.cml.org or call 303-831-6411.

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