



GET THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE

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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Fall 2018 Municipal Election Preview

October 15, 2018, Denver, CO – On November 6, electors in 80 cities and towns across Colorado will have the chance to decide a combined total of over 150 municipal tax issues and other questions in addition to the many decisions they will make regarding federal, state, county, and district concerns. Twenty of these municipalities also have council members or trustees on the ballot, including Pueblo, where voters will elect a mayor for the first time, from a pool of sixteen candidates.

Governance

Castle Pines voters will consider whether to form a home rule charter commission, and who might be on this proposed commission. Green Mountain Falls is asking if the number of trustees should be reduced from six to four, and Victor is asking its voters whether the city clerk should be appointed by city council, rather than be elected. Fort Morgan voters have the choice to amend the charter to designate the chief of police as an appointed official reporting directly to the city council.

Broadband

Colorado statutes require an election to allow a municipality to provide broadband service or partner with the private sector to provide that service, and Aurora, Blue River, Canon City, Erie, Florence, Fountain, Las Animas, and Wheat Ridge will ask their voters to join the list of 93 cities and towns whose voters have already said yes.

Marijuana

Aurora has medical marijuana cultivation and manufacturing on the ballot, while Delta is asking four separate questions relating to retail and medical sales, cultivation, manufacturing, research and development, testing, and transporters of marijuana.

Bayfield, Hudson, Las Animas, Palmer Lake, and Saguache voters will decide whether to allow certain marijuana establishments, as well as whether to implement a special marijuana tax should these businesses be allowed.

Marijuana taxes are being considered in Aurora, Moffat, Northglenn, Snowmass Village, while Nunn is asking voters to amend the town's marijuana tax code to conform to state statute.

Revenue Retention

Hot Sulphur Springs and Lochbuie are requesting exemption from the statutory 5.5% limitation on property tax, while Olathe and Rockvale's questions more broadly ask to be exempted from all limitations. Boulder is requesting to retain all revenue from the 2016 sugar-sweetened beverage tax, and Wheat Ridge is asking to retain all revenue from a sales and use tax approved the same year to fund capital projects. Lakewood is asking to be exempt from TABOR revenue limitations through 2025 to pay for open space, public safety, and infrastructure.

Tax and bond issues

Several lodging tax questions are on the ballot this year, in Buena Vista, Canon City, Gilcrest, Grand Junction, Green Mountain Falls, and Hudson. Ouray is asking to change the method of levying the existing lodging tax, while Glendale would like to reallocate a portion of its revenues.

Boulder and Lafayette are each asking for authorization to levy an oil and gas pollution tax.

The need to fund public safety and roads is apparent in this year's elections. New sales tax questions are on the ballot in Central City, Federal Heights, and Frederick for public safety and emergency services, and Glenwood Springs is requesting authorization for a property tax for the same. Evans, Kersey, Kiowa, and Pitkin are requesting a sales tax increase, and Rockvale is asking for a property tax increase, for roads, while Del Norte and Mead's requested sales tax increases would fund both public safety and roads. Greeley has two sales tax extensions on the ballot, one for public safety, and one for transportation and infrastructure.

Durango has elected to ask its voters for both a mill levy increase and an additional sales and use tax to fund public safety and infrastructure improvements.

Berthoud, Delta, and Georgetown are asking for a sales tax increase to fund parks and recreation improvements. In addition to the new tax on the ballot, Berthoud is also asking for a reallocation of an existing sales tax to fund parks, recreation, open space, and trails.

Steamboat Springs has two tax questions on the ballot – an extension of a sales and use tax for public education purposes as well as a new sales and use tax to support air carriers in providing flights to the region. Denver has four sales tax questions as well: to fund parks and open space, to fund scholarships and support services for college students, to provide healthy food and food-based education to children, and to fund mental health services and treatment.

Use taxes are on the ballot in Black Hawk, Fleming, and Minturn.

Other tax questions 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 is being requested by:

- Arvada - \$79.8 million for roads
- Berthoud - \$30 million for parks and recreation
- 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
- Sterling - \$37 million for wastewater capital improvements

Telluride has three questions on the ballot, all to fund and finance affordable housing: a property tax increase of 2 mills, a sales and use tax increase and authorization for \$12 million in debt, and separate authorization for \$8.1 million in debt.

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.

Publication Requirements

To save money on publication costs, Bayfield, Green Mountain Falls, and Lochbuie are asking their voters to authorize the publication of ordinance by title only, and they are joined by Jamestown and Rockvale in requesting authorization to no longer publish the bills list or contracts awarded. Parachute is seeking permission to post notices of ordinances on the town website rather than the newspaper.

Election Changes

Golden voters may decide to add to their ranks, should they approve a question to allow 16 and 17 year olds to vote in municipal elections.

Granby and Hot Sulphur Springs are asking their voters to move their regular town elections to November of even-numbered years, while Gunnison is requesting a move to November of odd years. Aspen voters will decide whether to move their elections, currently held in May, to March of odd years.

Boulder and Denver also have election changes on the ballot. Boulder's questions relate to changes in the petition, signature verification, and initiative, referendum, and recall processes. Denver voters have the option to

implement 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

Aspen, Aurora, Boulder, Broomfield, Central City, Dacono, Denver, Edgewater, Littleton, Parachute, and Steamboat Springs are asking their voters to eliminate, clarify, or otherwise update various provisions of their home rule charter.

Castle Rock has several charter amendments on the ballot, to support the implementation of the voter- approved change to a Mayor elected at large. Dacono voters will decide whether to offer compensation to the appointed members of boards and commissions, as well as whether to increase pay of elected officials.

Other issues

Other issues to be decided include:

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

Additional election details can be viewed by visiting the CML website. CML wishes to thank the city and town clerks who assisted CML staff in compiling this election data.

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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