

 <p><b>COLORADO MUNICIPAL LEAGUE</b></p>	<p><b>GET THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE</b> <b>Media Contact:</b> <b>Sarah Werner, Engagement and Communications Manager</b> 1144 Sherman St., Denver, CO 80203 (p) 303-831-6411 (f) 303-860-8175 <a href="mailto:swerner@cml.org">swerner@cml.org</a> <a href="http://www.cml.org">www.cml.org</a></p>
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## **NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Colorado Municipal League releases fall municipal election results**

**Nov. 4, 2020, Denver, Colo.** – Yesterday, voters in 70 cities and towns across Colorado considered local questions and races, in addition to the federal and state races and questions on the ballot. Avon, Castle Rock, Central City, Dacono, Gilcrest, Granby, Hayden, Holyoke, Hudson, Kiowa, Lochbuie, Palmer Lake, Parker, Snowmass Village, Superior and Williamsburg held their regularly scheduled candidate elections, while the remainder held special elections on initiated and referred ballot questions. Over 100 municipal ballot questions were considered across the state. The following results are unofficial and subject to change.

#### **Tax and bond issues**

Sales tax questions were approved in:

- Cokedale – for general operating and maintenance expenses
- Denver – one tax to fund programs to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, and to adapt to climate change; and a separate tax to fund housing, shelter, or services for people experiencing homelessness
- Eckley – for community infrastructure and maintenance
- Hayden – for parks and recreation
- Marble – for general operating expenses

Sales tax questions failed in:

- Eads – for the construction of a public swimming pool
- Kiowa – for general operating expenses
- Loveland – for public safety, infrastructure and capital equipment, and operational expenses
- Mead – one tax for police department expenses; and a separate tax for street improvements and maintenance
- Monument – for police services, programs, and facilities

Sales tax extensions were approved in:

- Aspen – for educational purposes

- Fort Lupton – for street improvements
- Greeley – for capital construction projects
- Pueblo – for economic development

Boulder voters granted authority to extend and expand the purposes for which a utility occupation tax was approved, to include costs associated with the formation of a municipal electric utility and to be used to fund initiatives that support the city's clean energy goals in the context of the city's racial equity goals and commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement.

A tobacco tax question passed in Gypsum.

Louisville voters approved a tax on disposable bags.

Lodging taxes passed in Eagle, Eaton and Nucla, and failed in Englewood and Windsor. Holyoke voters approved an extension to their existing lodging tax.

In Boulder, voters approved an excise tax to be paid by residential landlords on rental licenses to fund a program to provide rental assistance for persons vulnerable to eviction and to provide legal representation to tenants who face eviction.

Two property tax extensions were approved in:

- Snowmass Village – for educational purposes
- Ouray – for flume, drainage, debris and flood control repairs

Debt authority was considered by voters in:

- Castle Pines – rejected \$30 million for road improvements, to be paid from an accompanying mill levy increase
- Hayden – approved \$3.8 million for parks and recreation purposes
- Longmont – approved \$80 million to finance water system improvements

### **Mill levy adjustments to offset declining property tax revenue**

Fraser, Glenwood Springs, Kremmling, Vail, and Winter Park voters approved adjusting their respective mill levy rates annually as needed to offset revenue reductions caused by state-imposed changes to the percentage used to determine assessed valuation of property, such as due to requirements of the Gallagher Amendment. Even though the Gallagher Amendment was repealed by virtue of the adoption of Amendment B, voter approval of these local ballot questions may still prove useful to the five municipalities. For example, if the state ever statutorily reduces the assessment ratio for either residential or non-residential property, these municipalities will be able to adjust their levies to avoid any revenue loss.

Avon, Broomfield and Eagle voters said no to similar requests.

### **Revenue retention**

Grand Junction and La Junta voters granted authority to collect, retain, and spend all revenues as allowed by voter approval under the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR).

Colorado Springs voters granted authority to retain excess revenue in 2019 and 2020, as well as authority to use 2019 revenues, rather than 2020 revenues, which were impacted by the pandemic, as the base from which future revenue and spending limitations are calculated.

Historically, municipalities have passed a majority of the TABOR-related questions that have been asked, with a 61% approval rate for tax questions, 70% approval rate for debt questions and 87% approval rate for revenue retention questions since voter approval was first required in 1993.

## **Governance**

Boulder and Littleton voters each passed a charter amendment providing that their respective mayors will be directly elected, rather than selected by city council. In Boulder, the election of the mayor will be decided by ranked-choice voting, also known as instant runoff voting.

In Severance, voters approved a question inquiring if the town should initiate the process to become a home rule municipality.

Iliff voters elected to reduce the number of trustees on their town board from six to four. Peetz voters eliminated term limits for their elected officials, while Fleming and Iliff voters elected to keep them.

Idaho Springs voters rejected a proposal to transition the position of the city clerk to an appointed position rather than an elected position.

## **Gaming**

Black Hawk, Central City and Cripple Creek voters granted authorization to replace the single bet limit of up to \$100 with unlimited single bets and to delegate authority to their respective city councils to authorize additional games, as allowed with the passage of the statewide initiative authorizing these changes (Amendment 77).

## **Broadband**

Berthoud, Denver and Englewood received approval to be exempted from the statutory restriction on providing broadband or telecommunications services that also prohibits most uses of municipal funding for infrastructure to improve local broadband or telecommunications services. This election brings the total number of municipalities that have been exempted to 115.

## **Marijuana**

Marijuana businesses were approved in:

- Buena Vista – retail stores
- Cedaredge – medical dispensaries and retail stores
- Fort Lupton – medical dispensaries and retail stores
- Lakewood – retail stores and cultivation
- Littleton – retail stores
- Paonia – medical dispensaries and retail stores
- Romeo – retail stores, cultivation, manufacturing and testing

Eckley voters defeated a question that would have allowed retail stores, cultivation, manufacturing and testing. Kiowa voters defeated a question to allow medical dispensaries and retail stores, as well as a separate question that would have approved a marijuana tax.

Marijuana taxes passed in Broomfield, Buena Vista, Cedaredge, Dinosaur, Fort Lupton, Paonia and Winter Park.

## **Publication requirements**

Palmer Lake voters authorized the town to no longer publish in the newspaper the bills list or contracts awarded, instead posting the information to the town website. Fleming voters authorized the publication of ordinances by title rather than in full.

## **Election changes**

Haxtun and Monument voters approved moving their regular elections to November of even-numbered years, and Yuma voters approved a move to November of odd-numbered years commencing in 2025.

## **Charter amendments**

Several charter amendments were approved in home rule municipalities around the state:

- Avon – regarding council compensation
- Boulder – regarding membership of the Boulder Arts Commission
- Broomfield – allowing the extraction of minerals to be considered a change of use in areas designated as “open space”
- Edgewater – authorizing the city council to consolidate, but not abolish, city departments established by the charter
- Longmont – allowing for leases of city property of up to 30 years

Colorado Springs had two amendments on the ballot which would require conveyances of city-owned parkland be approved either by a super-majority of the council or by voters. Both amendments passed, but only the amendment requiring approval by voters will become effective as it received more affirmative votes.

Five charter amendments were approved in Craig, updating residency requirements for the city manager, city attorney, and municipal judge, as well as amending the responsibility of the mayor to present a state of the city message and addressing vacancies on the city council.

Of Denver’s several charter amendments on the ballot, the three amendments concerning city council authority all passed: to consent to certain mayoral appointments; to initiate a supplemental appropriation or transfer, following a consultation with the manager of finance; and to procure professional services without executive branch approval. Two other amendments that passed will create the Board of Transportation and Infrastructure to advise the department manager and provide more flexibility in the procedures and scheduling of meetings. The sole amendment to fail would have expanded the appointment authority of the elected clerk and recorder and would have eliminated from the charter any reference to the office of Director of Elections.

## **Other issues**

Other issues decided include:

- Boulder – approved the granting of a franchise to Public Service Company of Colorado for gas and electricity distribution
- Cañon City – rejected the granting of a franchise to Black Hills Energy for electricity distribution
- Denver – approved the granting of a provisional permit to pit bull owners, thus overturning the current ban on pit bulls
- Eagle – approved the organization of a downtown development authority
- Milliken – approved the sale of public property
- Montrose – approved the granting of a franchise to Delta-Montrose Electric Association for electricity distribution

*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](http://www.cml.org) or call 303-831-6411.*

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