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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Colorado Municipal League releases fall municipal election preview

Sept. 29, 2022, Denver, Colo. – On Nov. 8, voters in at least 75 cities and towns across Colorado will consider local questions and candidates as part of the general election. Nineteen municipalities will hold their regularly-scheduled candidate elections, while the remainder will hold special elections on initiated and referred ballot questions. Over 140 municipal ballot questions are being considered across the state. The Town of Rico will conduct its regular election on Nov. 1.

Ballot issues and questions being considered by voters include:

Housing

Several municipalities have housing-related tax and bond issues on the ballot.

The following lodging taxes under consideration specifically name housing as an approved expenditure.

- Georgetown – to support the activities of business promotion and tourism, including housing and childcare for the tourism-related workforce
- Grand Junction – for affordable housing programs and initiatives

The Estes Park Local Marketing District also has a lodging tax under consideration to support workforce housing and workforce childcare needs in the town.

Snowmass Village is requesting authorization to expand the allowed uses of revenues from the existing lodging tax and a portion of the existing sales tax to include workforce housing purposes.

Durango is requesting authority to retain revenues from the 2021 voter-approved lodging tax increase, with the excess revenues to be used for affordable housing programs, transportation and arts and cultural programs. Vail is also requesting authority to retain revenues from the 2021 sales tax, provided that the revenues are used for housing initiatives and developments.

Short-term rental taxes will be considered in:

- Aspen – to fund affordable housing, infrastructure maintenance and environmental initiatives
- Carbondale – to fund affordable and attainable housing programs and projects
- Dillon – to fund community projects and services addressing visitor impacts
- Grand Junction – to fund affordable housing programs
- Steamboat Springs – to fund affordable and attainable housing projects and associated infrastructure improvements

Denver's ballot will include an excise tax to be paid by landlords on each individual residential property for lease, with the revenues being used to fund tenant legal services.

Dillon is requesting authorization to increase debt up to \$20 million for workforce housing projects.

Grand Junction voters will decide whether to amend their city charter to increase the maximum authorized lease term for city property from 25 years to 99 years when the property is to be used for affordable housing projects.

Tax and bond issues

Sales tax questions will be on the ballot in:

- Cripple Creek – for general expenses
- Dove Creek – for streets, capital improvements and parks and recreation
- Englewood – one tax increase for street maintenance, and a separate tax increase for alternative policing programs relating to homelessness, mental health, and addiction
- Fowler – for criminal justice as well as street and alley repair and maintenance
- Gunnison – for maintaining existing streets and related infrastructure, including ADA accessibility, curbs and gutters and drainage
- Idaho Springs – to fund water and wastewater capital improvements
- La Junta – for the general fund
- Milliken – for general operations including public safety, municipal services, transportation, improvements and parks and recreational facilities
- Nederland – for law enforcement services and personnel and other personnel
- Sugar City – for general expenses
- Superior – for recovery efforts related to the 2021 Marshall Fire
- Wiggins – for streets related capital improvements
- Windsor – for creating and preserving open space and working farms and community separators
- Yuma – for emergency services and streets

Aspen is requesting an extension of their parks and open space tax. Pueblo is requesting an extension of their public safety sales tax.

Lodging taxes will be considered in:

- Dillon – to address visitor impacts related to recreation, public safety, street and parking improvements and town center redevelopment
- Hudson – for general governmental purposes
- Julesburg – for services and infrastructure
- Littleton – to promote arts and culture and tourism
- Lyons – to address visitor impacts and fund community projects and capital improvements
- Nederland – for health and human services programs and law enforcement services
- Palisade – to promote sustainable tourism and emergency services

Four property tax mill levy increases are on the ballot:

- Denver – for library services
- Fountain – for public safety
- Palmer Lake – for general municipal purposes, with the number of mills determined by whether the separate marijuana question passes
- Williamsburg – to improve roads and flood drainage

Erie is requesting an extension of an existing property tax mill levy to be used for trails, parks and open space.

Other tax issues include:

- Boulder – a question to replace the existing utility occupation tax and climate action plan excise tax with a new climate tax, and a separate question authorizing debt to be repaid from the climate tax up to \$52.9 million to meet the city’s climate goals
- Central City – an occupation tax on table games and gaming devices
- Severance – a use tax on motor vehicles to fund transportation infrastructure

Cherry Hills Village voters will decide whether to amend the city tax code to persons engaged in business in the city, including remote sellers and others making deliveries to residents, to collect sales tax.

Authority to increase debt is being requested by:

- Fort Lupton – up to \$10 million and approval to extend the city’s community recreation center tax, to fund phase two of the recreation center
- Longmont – up to \$20 million for storm drainage system improvements
- Sterling – up to \$29 million for wastewater system improvements

Revenue retention

The following municipalities will be requesting authority to retain and spend all revenues collected from previously approved taxes:

- Denver – two questions, to retain revenues from and continue to impose the 2020 climate action sales tax and the 2020 homelessness resolution sales tax
- Eagle – two questions, to retain revenues from the 2020 tobacco tax and the 2020 lodging tax, with the lodging tax revenues to be split between open space and marketing uses

Hartman and Milliken are requesting authority to retain and spend all revenues collected from all sources in 2023 and each subsequent year.

Home Rule

In Monument, voters will consider the adoption of a proposed home rule charter, which would make the town the 105th home rule municipality in the state. Meanwhile, in Erie and Lochbuie, residents will decide whether to form a home rule commission and, if so, determine who should serve on that commission.

Delta’s ballot will also include a vote on the creation of, and the members of, a charter commission, for the purpose of submitting amendments to their existing charter to be considered at a future election.

Governance

In Las Animas, voters will decide in separate questions whether to make the city clerk and the city treasurer appointive rather than elected positions.

Iliff is asking voters to consider eliminating term limits for the mayor and trustees.

Broadband

Castle Pines, Lone Tree and Pueblo are seeking approval to join the 119 municipalities already exempted by local voters 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.

Marijuana

Marijuana businesses are on the ballot in:

- Colorado Springs – one question to authorize retail establishments, and a separate question authorizing a tax on retail sales
- Cripple Creek – a question to authorize marijuana businesses, contingent upon the passing of a separate question authorizing an excise tax on cultivation, a sales tax on retail sales and an occupation tax on medical sales

- Dove Creek – three questions: to authorize retail and medical businesses, to authorize an excise tax on retail cultivation and to authorize an occupation tax on retail sales
- Hotchkiss – authorizing retail and medical businesses and commencing the collection of a 2016 tax on marijuana sales
- Nunn – a question to authorize retail and medical businesses, contingent upon the passing of a separate question authorizing a tax on retail sales
- Palmer Lake – authorizing up to two retail stores

Taxes on marijuana sales are also being considered in Ault, Nederland and Sugar City, and a tax on wholesale unprocessed marijuana is being considered in Fort Lupton.

Lamar's ballot includes a citizen's initiative to amend the city charter to prohibit certain actions relating to marijuana, including the licensing and operation of marijuana establishments and prohibiting actions relating to having more than one ounce of marijuana for personal use.

Election changes

Boulder, Fleming, LaSalle, Timnath and Wiggins are asking voters to move their regular elections to November of even-numbered years. Silt voters will consider moving their election date to November of odd-numbered years.

Mt. Crested Butte is asking voters to move their regular election to November of even-numbered years and, in a separate question, is requesting an extension of certain councilmembers' terms to allow for an orderly transition.

The Fort Collins ballot also has a question to move their election date to November of odd-numbered years, as well as a second question to require ranked-choice voting for the offices of mayor and councilmember.

Charter amendments

Several charter amendments are on the ballot in home rule municipalities around the state.

- Aurora – amending qualifications for elective office to replace the general prohibition against convicted felons holding elective office with a more specific prohibition against persons convicted of embezzlement of public money, bribery, perjury, solicitation of bribery, or subornation of perjury
- Boulder – clarifying sections related to candidates running for more than one office, candidacy by sitting council members, filling council vacancies and changing the swearing-in date of newly elected officials
- Cañon City – four charter amendments regarding open meetings, certain employment provisions, accepting land to be used as parks or playgrounds and provisions relating to the municipal court and municipal jail
- Cherry Hills Village – requiring voter approval to transfer most city trails or open space property
- Craig – concerning the powers of the council
- Dacono – amending language concerning the Public Works Department to more accurately reflect the duties and responsibilities of the Public Works Director
- Denver – modernizing election procedures, including initiative provisions, ballot question language, and candidate nomination deadlines
- Englewood – eight proposed amendments, which would update language to be gender silent; update election language to track state law and allow flexibility in conduct of elections; revise redistricting language to comply with federal law; amend language related to the start of council terms; allow for more flexibility in council meetings, including allowing remote meetings; remove reference to the development and maintenance of an airport; adjust requirements regarding number of members on boards and commissions; and make changes to comply with the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act
- Fort Collins – amending the section regarding mayor and council compensation to provide for a salary that is a certain percentage of the area median income, as well as to provide councilmembers the option of receiving healthcare-related benefits
- Littleton – allowing for procurement policies to be set by ordinance

- Longmont – two charter amendments, one of which would remove outdated language and a second which would make changes regarding prospective council vacancies created when a councilmember runs for another elected office
- Rico – amending rules concerning the conduct of elections to facilitate the town’s participation in coordinated elections
- Severance – clarifying terms and term limits when filling a vacancy
- Timnath – increasing the threshold of registered electors that would trigger an increase in the number of councilmembers and commence redistricting

Other issues

- Avon, Eagle, Gypsum, Minturn, Red Cliff and Vail – creating the Eagle Valley Transportation Authority and levying a sales tax to fund its operations
- Boulder – a question repealing the library commission and associated tax if a separate initiative to create a library district passes, and a citizen-initiated referendum regarding the annexation of a property known as CU South
- Dacono – increasing mayor and council compensation
- Denver – a citizen-initiated measure requiring multifamily residential premises, non-residential premises, food waste producers, retail food mobile license holders and special events organizers to offer recycling and/or organic material diversion, and a separate citizen-initiated question concerning an ordinance to create a sidewalk master plan, which would charge a fee to property owners and authorize bonds to fund a sustainable sidewalk program
- Gilcrest – allowing chickens in residential districts in town
- LaSalle – authorizing the publication of ordinances by title rather than in full provided ordinances are available for review at town hall
- Las Animas – authorizing the publication of ordinances by title rather than in full provided ordinances are posted in full on the city’s website
- Littleton – a citizen-initiated referendum regarding a zoning ordinance regarding a property known as the Newton Property General Planned Development Plan (Aspen Grove), and three questions related to the creation of a downtown development authority, authorizing the retention and expenditure of all revenues of the authority, and authorizing a property tax mill levy increase within the boundaries of the authority
- Lyons – expanding the permitted and conditional uses of the parks and open space zoning district to allow for arts and cultural and non-profit facilities
- Mead – four questions related to the creation of a general improvement district, authorizing two property taxes for the district, and authorizing up to \$3 million in debt for the district

Note

Berthoud’s ballot will include a question that would authorize the town to annex property but the Board of Trustees withdrew the question and votes cast on the question are deemed invalid.

Not all ballots were available at the time of publication. Any questions not included in this press release will be included in the post-election summary. CML thanks the city, town and county clerks who assisted CML staff in compiling this election information.

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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