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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Colorado Municipal League releases fall municipal election preview

Oct. 12, 2020, Denver, CO – On Nov. 3, voters in 70 cities and towns across Colorado will consider local questions and races in addition to the state and federal races on the ballot. Avon, Castle Rock, Central City, Dacono, Gilcrest, Granby, Hayden, Holyoke, Hudson, Kiowa, Lochbuie, Palmer Lake, Parker, Snowmass Village, Superior, and Williamsburg will hold their regularly-scheduled candidate election, while the remainder are holding special elections on initiated and referred ballot questions. Over 100 municipal ballot questions are being considered across the state.

Ballot questions being considered by voters include:

Tax and bond issues

Sales tax questions will be on the ballot 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;
- Eads – for the construction of a public swimming pool;
- Eckley – for community infrastructure and maintenance;
- Hayden – for parks and recreation;
- Kiowa – for general operating expenses;
- Loveland – for public safety, infrastructure and capital equipment, and operational expenses;
- Marble – for general operating 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 are being requested by:

- Aspen – for educational purposes;
- Fort Lupton – for street improvements;
- Greeley – for capital construction projects;
- Pueblo – for economic development.

Boulder is requesting 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 is on the ballot in Gypsum.

Louisville voters will consider a tax on disposable bags.

Lodging taxes will be on the ballot in Eagle, Eaton, Englewood, Nucla, and Windsor. Holyoke is requesting an extension to their existing lodging tax.

In Boulder, voters have the option to levy an excise tax to be paid by residential landlords 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 are on the ballot:

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

Debt authority is being requested by:

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

Gallagher Amendment adjustments

Avon, Broomfield, Eagle, Fraser, Glenwood Springs, Kremmling, Vail, and Winter Park are requesting authority to adjust 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:

Revenue retention

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

Colorado Springs is requesting permission to retain excess revenue in 2019 and 2020, as well as authority to use 2019 revenues, rather than 2020 revenues, 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 will consider charter amendments providing that the mayor be directly elected, rather than selected by city council. Should Boulder's amendment pass, the election of the mayor will be decided by ranked-choice voting, also known as instant runoff voting.

In Severance, voters will decide if the town should initiate the process to become a home rule municipality.

Iliff voters will decide whether to reduce the number of trustees on their town board from six to four. Fleming, Iliff, and Peetz voters will consider eliminating term limits for their elected officials.

Idaho Springs is asking whether the position of the city clerk should transition to an appointed position rather than an elected position.

Gaming

Black Hawk, Central City, and Cripple Creek are each asking their voters for 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, provided that the statewide initiative allowing these changes (Amendment 77) is also approved in the November election.

Broadband

Berthoud, Denver, and Englewood are seeking approval to join the [112 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:

- Buena Vista – retail stores;
- Cedaredge – medical dispensaries and retail stores;
- Eckley – retail stores, cultivation, manufacturing, and testing;
- Fort Lupton – medical dispensaries and retail stores;
- Kiowa – 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.

Marijuana taxes are being considered in Broomfield, Buena Vista, Cedaredge, Dinosaur, Fort Lupton, Kiowa, Paonia, and Winter Park.

Publication requirements

To save money on publication costs, Palmer Lake is requesting authorization to no longer publish in the newspaper the bills list or contracts awarded, while Fleming is seeking permission to publish ordinances by title rather than in full.

Election changes

Monument is asking voters to move their regulation elections to November of even-numbered years, and Yuma is requesting a move to November of odd-numbered years.

Charter amendments

Several charter amendments are on the ballot 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”
- Colorado Springs – two amendments, only one of which may become effective, to require conveyances of city-owned parkland be approved either by a super-majority of the council or by voters
- 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

Craig charter amendments up for approval include updated residency requirements for the city manager, city attorney, and municipal judge, as well as amendments regarding the responsibility of the mayor to present a state of the city message and regarding vacancies on the city council.

Denver also has several charter amendments on the ballot. Three amendments concern city council authority 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. Other amendments would create the Board of Transportation and Infrastructure to advise the

department manager; provide more flexibility in the procedures and scheduling of meetings; and expand the appointment authority of the elected clerk and recorder.

Other issues

Other issues to be decided include:

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

CML thanks the city, town, and county 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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