

Election — November 3, 2009

## City of Longmont Ballot Issues



Prepared by League of Women Voters  
of Boulder County

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### BALLOT ISSUE 2A

**Note: All three Longmont issues have been  
referred to voters by city council.**

#### Street Fund Sales Tax Extension

SHALL ORDINANCE O-2009-50, EXTENDING THE EXISTING STREET SYSTEM MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT COMPONENT OF SALES AND USE TAXES, AT THE RATE OF THREE-QUARTERS OF A CENT, FROM DECEMBER 31, 2011 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2016, BE APPROVED AND BECOME EFFECTIVE?

##### Background

In 1986 voters approved a 3/4 cent (75 cents per \$100) sales and use tax dedicated to maintaining and improving Longmont's street system. This tax has a sunset provision by which voters must approve continuation of the tax every five years. Voters have approved it every time.

##### Those in favor say

- Street maintenance and improvements are essential to a safe and efficient transportation system.

- This is an extension of an existing tax and would not change the rate of sales and use tax currently paid in Longmont.

##### Those opposed say

- Residents of Longmont would pay less total tax if this tax were not continued.

### BALLOT ISSUE 2B

#### Wastewater Revenue Bonds

Shall City of Longmont debt be increased in an amount not to exceed \$21,130,000 by the issuance of wastewater revenue bonds for the purpose of financing wastewater system capital improvements; and shall the bonds be paid solely from the City's wastewater utility enterprise revenues and be sold in one series or more at a price above, below or equal to the principal amount of such bonds and with such terms and conditions, including provisions for redemption prior to maturity with or without payment of a premium of not more than 3%, as the City Council may determine?

##### Background

Longmont's wastewater treatment plant and its effluent currently meet or exceed all state and federal quality standards, but those standards are expected to become much more stringent in the next five to eight years. Constructed in 1956, the plant has been expanded and upgraded many times—the latest expansion was in 2004—but some portions are 30 to 50 years old and in need of repair.

##### Major provisions

The proposal would approve issuance of bonds to fund improvements that will expand and update the plant. While capital costs are estimated at \$18.2 million over the next five years, the proposal allows \$21.13 million, including interest payments and other costs.

##### Those in favor say

- The proposal would allow the plant to meet future quality standards and protect St. Vrain Creek.
- There will be no water rate increase associated with this bond.

##### Those opposed say

- Other sources of funding should be found so that the City does not go into debt.

### BALLOT ISSUE 2C

#### City Telecommunications Services

Shall the City of Longmont, Colorado, be authorized to provide telecommunications services, advanced services, and cable television services, as defined in Title 29, Article 27 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, including but not limited to the provision of high speed internet services, to residential and commercial users within the City of Longmont, Colorado, and within the service area of the City's electric utility enterprise, as intended subscribers, with the City being authorized to provide the services either independently or in concert with others by contract, sale, or purchase of resale or wholesale services?

##### Background

In 1997, the City installed a fiber optic backbone network, with the goal of supporting the City's economic vitality through enhanced telecommunications services. In 1998 the City began licensing the use of dark (unused) fiber capacity on its network. The system was completed in 2008. Lease fees, however, have not recovered installation costs; more than 60% of the network remains unused. In 2005 the Colorado General Assembly passed legislation which provides that before a local government may provide telecommunications services, advanced services, or cable television services, a majority of voters must approve.

### Major provisions

Question 2C would allow the City to utilize its existing infrastructure to develop services and provide them to the community, either directly or in partnership with the private sector.

### Those in favor say

- The proposal would allow the City to recoup its investment in fiber optics, as other U.S. cities have done.
- Using the City's network could stimulate business retention and economic development and enhance community services such as education, health care, and public safety.
- The proposal would allow Longmont residents better service at competitive prices.

### Those opposed say

- The proposal amounts to throwing more good money after bad. Longmont would better serve its residents by cutting its losses and selling its largely unused fiber infrastructure to a private firm.
- Private-sector telecommunications companies are more experienced and efficient.
- Municipalities should not be allowed to compete against private telecommunications companies.