

Election — November 7, 2017

**City of Longmont
Ballot Issues**



**League of Women Voters®
of Boulder County**

The League of Women Voters is not responsible for the accuracy or fairness of the arguments of either side.

**Ballot Issue 2H
[Public Safety Sales Tax]**

SHALL CITY OF LONGMONT TAXES BE INCREASED \$6.2 MILLION ANNUALLY IN THE FIRST FULL YEAR AND BY SUCH AMOUNTS AS ARE RAISED ANNUALLY THEREAFTER BY INCREASING THE CITY SALES AND USE TAX RATE FROM 3.275 PERCENT TO 3.53 PERCENT, WHICH IS AN INCREASE OF TWO AND FIFTY-FIVE ONE HUNDREDTH CENTS ON EACH TEN DOLLAR PURCHASE, BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2018, WITH PROCEEDS USED EXCLUSIVELY TO INCREASE THE LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY IN THE CITY OF LONGMONT, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO:
• POLICE OFFICERS AND PERSONNEL FOR TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT AND TO INVESTIGATE SEX ASSAULTS;
• POLICE OFFICERS TO ENSURE SAFETY OF OFFICERS AND TO IMPROVE EMERGENCY RESPONSE;
• EMERGENCY DISPATCHERS FOR 911 RESPONSE;
• FIREFIGHTERS TO ENSURE SAFE AND SUFFICIENT RESPONSE TO

EMERGENCIES;
• PERSONNEL TO SUPPORT EMERGENCY PUBLIC SAFETY RESPONDERS; AND
• POLICE AND FIRE EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES TO ENSURE SAFETY;
SHALL THE REVENUES FROM SUCH TAX AND ANY INVESTMENT INCOME EARNED FROM SUCH REVENUES BE COLLECTED AND SPENT AS A VOTER-APPROVED REVENUE CHANGE UNDER SECTION 20 OF ARTICLE X OF THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION; AND SHALL ORDINANCE O-2017-46, WHICH INCREASES THE SALES AND USE TAX RATE, BE APPROVED?

Major Provisions

The City of Longmont is asking voters to approve a 0.255% increase to the existing public safety tax. The proposal raises the current 0.325% public safety sales tax to 0.58% (this equals about 2.5 cents per \$10 spent on taxable goods).

This increase of less than 1 percent is a dedicated public safety sales tax to be used to hire more police officers, dispatchers, firefighters, and support staff and to purchase the equipment and facilities to provide public safety services.

- A vote **YES** means: Tax revenues will be available to increase emergency services.
- A vote **NO** means: Public Safety services in the city of Longmont will not expand unless other funding sources are used.

Background

The Longmont City population (currently 95,000) has grown by 10,000 in the past 10 years. Examples of growth in service demands:

- Emergency police calls for Longmont will probably exceed 14,500 for 2017. This represents a 15% increase from 3 years ago.
- Fire & EMS calls are up 80% over the past 10 years and are on track to exceed 10,900 for 2017. For fire calls, professional associations

- now recommend 4 firefighters per call (Longmont provides 3).
- Violent crime, including sex crimes, domestic violence, and crimes against elderly are up 30% since 2012.
- Traffic volume and accidents have risen 30% over the past decade.
- Computer fraud and other technology-related crimes, not calculated, are believed to be rising.

Those IN FAVOR say

1. Public safety resources have not met the increasing demands of a growing community.
 - More police officers are needed to meet the increase in violent crime, crimes against the elderly, and traffic accidents.
 - More firefighters are needed in light of evolving professional standards and increased combustibility of modern building materials.
 - Relatedly, additional dispatchers are needed for significantly increased 911 demands.
2. This tax is necessary to support the public safety needs for a growing community that will continue to grow.

Those OPPOSED say

No organized opposition was identified by press time.

**Ballot Issue 2I
[Marijuana Tax]**

SHALL CITY OF LONGMONT TAXES BE INCREASED \$1.3 MILLION ANNUALLY IN THE FIRST FULL FISCAL YEAR AND BY SUCH AMOUNTS AS ARE RAISED ANNUALLY THEREAFTER BY THE IMPOSITION OF AN ADDITIONAL SALES TAX OF 3.0 PERCENT, WHICH IS AN INCREASE OF THIRTY CENTS ON EACH TEN DOLLAR

PURCHASE, BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2018, ON THE SALE OF RETAIL MARIJUANA AND RETAIL MARIJUANA PRODUCTS AS PROVIDED IN ORDINANCE O-2017-47, WITH THE RATE OF TAX BEING ALLOWED TO BE INCREASED OR DECREASED WITHOUT FURTHER VOTER APPROVAL SO LONG AS THE RATE OF TAXATION DOES NOT EXCEED 15 PERCENT, AND WITH PROCEEDS REPRESENTING 1.5 PERCENT OF SUCH SALES OR 15 CENTS ON EACH TEN DOLLAR PURCHASE USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES; SHALL THE REVENUES FROM SUCH TAX AND ANY INVESTMENT INCOME EARNED FROM SUCH REVENUES BE COLLECTED AND SPENT AS A VOTER-APPROVED REVENUE CHANGE UNDER SECTION 20 OF ARTICLE X OF THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION; AND SHALL ORDINANCE O-2017-47 BE APPROVED?

Major Provisions

The City of Longmont is asking voters to approve an additional sales tax on retail sales of marijuana and marijuana products, in future stores. The additional sales tax rate would initially be 3%, or 3 cents per dollar spent on marijuana products. This tax is in addition to Longmont's current combined sales taxes of 8.26% on other taxable items.

Half of the monies accrued from this additional tax would be used for the city's affordable housing projects.

Additionally, this proposal seeks permission for the city council to increase this sales tax rate (not to exceed 15%) or to decrease it, without further voter approval.

- A vote **YES** means: An initial 11.26% sales tax (Longmont's usual 8.26% plus the additional 3%), will be applied to marijuana sales, if stores open.
- A vote **NO** means: A sales tax above 8.26% will not be set for marijuana at this time.

Background

The City Council is considering approval for the establishment of four marijuana retail stores. This measure, if passed, would establish an additional tax on the sales without waiting for another election. When the voters of Colorado elected to allow the sale of marijuana outside of medical marijuana dispensaries, the potential for additional costs of regulation, public education and public safety were acknowledged. An additional sales tax maximum was set at 15% while allowing individual municipalities to determine what revenue would be appropriate for their community, and to put the amount to a vote for the city’s electors. Other cities in the county have set various tax rates for these sales within their own boundaries.

Those IN FAVOR say

1. This new sales tax will pay for the costs associated with marijuana sales within the city should the city council allow the such stores to open. Such costs include licensing, inspection, and public safety functions.
2. Beyond covering costs of city services related to marijuana sales, tax revenue from marijuana will be used to fund affordable housing projects.
3. Because many cities surrounding Longmont in Weld and Larimer counties do not allow marijuana sales, an additional tax in Longmont will help maximize the positive impact of marijuana sales in our community by collecting revenue from residents in other communities.
4. Longmont residents are paying taxes in Boulder, Lafayette, Louisville and other nearby communities that allow marijuana sales. By approving tax on marijuana in Longmont, the revenue currently going to other communities will stay in Longmont.

Those OPPOSED say

1. This *additional sales tax* in Longmont will make the marijuana stores in Longmont less competitive compared with those in other cities in the Front Range.
2. The City Council has not as yet specified a fund or specific use a marijuana tax will pay for outside of affordable housing. As such, revenues from this tax may go to the city's general fund.
3. *Additional taxes* unnecessarily target marijuana users to pay for city services. Taxes paid on marijuana should be no different than taxes on clothes, food and other consumer products sold in Longmont.
4. The additional 3% sales tax on this is merely the foot in the door: while a 3% sales tax addition on a \$10 package of marijuana amounts to an additional 30 cents; a 15% sales tax equates to an additional \$1.50.

Ballot Question 2J
[Water System Improvements]

Shall City of Longmont debt be increased in an amount not to exceed \$36,300,000 for the purpose of financing water system improvements, including but not limited to the construction of a water storage reservoir as part of the Windy Gap Firming Project at a participation level not to exceed 10,000 acre-feet; and shall the debt be evidenced by bonds, loan agreements, or other financial obligations payable solely from the City's water utility enterprise revenues and be issued at one time or in a series at a price above, below or equal to the principal amount of such debt and with such terms and conditions, including provisions for redemption prior to maturity with or without payment of premium, as the City Council may determine?

Major Provisions

The City of Longmont is asking voters to approve a \$36 million debt increase through the issuance of bonds. This debt increase represents Longmont’s share in the construction of a water supply reservoir for use by the city and others. To pay off this bond the city is proposing a water rate increase as shown:

<i>Rate Increases with Passage of Bond</i>		
	2017	2018
	2019	
% increase	9	13
	10	

- A vote **YES** means: You support the city’s actions to participate in construction of additional water storage facilities for existing water rights.
- A vote **NO** means: Longmont will not expand its water storage facilities unless funded by alternative means.

Background

The Windy Gap Firming Project includes the design and construction of the Chimney Hollow reservoir, west of Carter Lake and about the same size as Carter Lake. Longmont and several other entities currently have water rights in what is known as the Windy Gap Project. Windy Gap water diverted from the Colorado River is held in Lake Granby before it is delivered to Longmont and other towns through the Colorado-Big Thompson system. According to the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, during wet periods when Lake Granby is full, the Windy Gap Pump Plant cannot operate due to the absence of reservoir storage for Windy Gap Project water. The proposed Chimney Hollow Reservoir would be filled using Windy Gap’s original 1980 water rights. Chimney Hollow Reservoir would improve the reliability of water deliveries to participating water providers and the water users they serve.

Those IN FAVOR say:

1. Decades of planning with regional partners, to secure the current and future water supply for Longmont and other entities, has led to a solution in this reservoir project.
2. Longmont’s participation in the construction of a reservoir to maximize collection of existing water rights will provide stability in meeting the water needs of the community.
3. Bond financing results in user rates that are initially lower than if cash were used to fund the improvements and distributes costs more equitably across both current and future residents.
4. New water connections will continue to contribute to funds dedicated to Longmont’s water supply through building permit fees.

Those OPPOSED say:

1. Although cash funding of the improvements would result in higher rates for several years, the long-term rate impact would be lower because there would be no bond interest to be paid.
2. Longmont’s long-term water supply needs could be met though alternative methods or projects.
3. Longmont does not need this much water now or in the future.

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