

Aurora seeks input on ballot measures that raise taxes

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Aurorans can give input starting Tuesday on three ballot measures proposing to raise taxes.

The public input period ends Sept. 18, according to the city's newsletter. The full ballot language and comment forms are available on the Engage Aurora website.

Aurora City Councilmembers voted unanimously in June to send three sales tax increases to the November ballot.

If voters approve the measures, they would raise the city's sales taxes for the first time since 1993. The money is slated to go toward "Build Up Aurora" to fund projects that include construction of Gun Club Road, updates to police and fire stations and transportation safety improvements.

Aurora's sales and use tax would increase from 8.5% to 8.825% in the part of Aurora in Adams County, and from 8% to 8.325% in the part of Aurora in Arapahoe County.

The conversation about raising taxes for infrastructure projects began after a task force identified \$2.08 billion in priority infrastructure project needs, including projects that exceed what the city can afford in its annual budget, according to Deputy City Manager Laura Perry.

The total needs cost includes \$596 million in transportation infrastructure projects, \$256 million in parks, recreation and open space projects, \$84 million in libraries, arts and culture projects, \$247 million in other city facility projects and \$900 million in public safety projects.

Under Colorado law, local governments are required to send out an election notice for ballot questions subject to the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights and collect public input on them.

Task force members narrowed down the list of projects to 65 that best address community needs, Perry said.

City staff proposed a 2026 bond program to the council that would fund the facilities, transportation infrastructure and public safety projects.

The 65 projects cost \$264.5 million and the bonds will be supported by sales tax and use rate increases if voters approve them, Perry said. Three measures will go to Aurora's November ballot and, if all three pass, the city's sales and use tax rate would increase by 0.325%.

Transportation infrastructure projects include Gun Club Road construction, replacement of the city's oldest bridge, sidewalk improvements, Aurora Reservoir transportation improvements and other traffic safety projects.

The public safety projects include capital improvements to police stations and the Aurora 911 facility, renovation of fire stations and the construction of a new fire station.

The community facilities projects include seven neighborhood park renovations, Aurora Center for Active Adults renovation, recreation center capital improvements, a new recreation center and library remodeling.

The full ballot language is available on the city's website.