

CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS

Designated Election Official:

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NOTICE OF ELECTION ON A REFERRED MEASURE
CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS
EL PASO COUNTY, STATE OF COLORADO

Election Date: November 5, 2019

Election Hours: 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.

Issue 2B

Ballot Title and Text:

WITHOUT IMPOSING ANY NEW TAX OR INCREASING THE RATE OF ANY EXISTING TAX, SHALL THE CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS BE PERMITTED TO RETAIN AND SPEND UP TO \$7,000,000, THE ESTIMATED 2018 FISCAL YEAR REVENUE ABOVE THE 2018 FISCAL YEAR REVENUE AND SPENDING LIMITATIONS, SOLELY FOR THE FOLLOWING PARKS, SPORTS AND CULTURAL FACILITIES AND TRAIL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS LOCATED WITHIN THE CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS:

- REPAIR, RESTORATION AND IMPROVEMENTS TO ACACIA, ANTLERS, MONUMENT VALLEY, PALMER AND PANORAMA PARKS
- REPAIR, RESTORATION AND IMPROVEMENTS TO ALAMO SQUARE/PIONEERS MUSEUM
- REPAIR, RESTORATION AND IMPROVEMENTS TO COTTONWOOD CREEK BASEBALL FIELDS, LEON YOUNG SPORTS COMPLEX, BOULDER PARK SPORTS COURTS AND THORNDALE PARK SPORTS COURTS
- TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS TO HOMESTEAD, MESA, SANDCREEK AND LEGACY LOOP TRAILS
- REPAIR AND REPAVING OF EVERGREEN AND FAIRVIEW CEMETERY PARKING AREAS
- PREPARATION OF COMMUNITY PARK MASTER PLAN FOR COLEMAN PARK

, AS A VOTER APPROVED REVENUE CHANGE AND EXCEPTION TO ANY CONSTITUTIONAL, CHARTER, OR CITY ORDINANCE OR CODE LIMITATIONS THAT MAY OTHERWISE APPLY?

Summary of written comments for Issue 2B

Voting yes for 2B provides an important \$7 million on projects to improve the safety and quality of our parks throughout the city. This investment in Colorado Springs and the parks and communal gathering places makes us one of the best places to live and raise a family in the country. The projects honor the vision of our Founder General William Palmer and help us celebrate the 150th birthday of Colorado Springs in 2021.

This is not a tax increase. 2B asks our voters if they will allow the City to retain revenue equivalent to \$31 dollars per household to invest in their communal spaces and quality of life. 2B honors the principles, fiscal responsibility and citizen input at the heart of TABOR.

Palmer, Monument Valley, Boulder, Alamo, Acacia and Antlers parks will all see significant improvements if 2B passes. Cottonwood Creek Park on the city's northeast side will get new artificial turf fields allowing more youth sports teams to play ball if 2B passes. Panorama Park in the southeast will receive funding for a new playground and water feature if 2B passes. Thorndale Park on the west side currently has unusable sports courts, and will receive new courts if 2B passes. Leon Young sports complex on the south side has one of the worst parking lots in the city and is dangerous for cars and people, and the lot will be resurfaced if 2B passes. Coleman Community Park on the east side will receive funding to create a park that will better serve residents living near Powers Blvd if 2B passes. Crumbling portions of the Homestead, Mesa, Sand Creek and Legacy Loop Trails will be fixed if 2B passes.

General fund support for parks is still less than it was 12 years ago. We have tens of millions of dollars in capital needs in our park system. We think we have amazing parks and open spaces – and we do. However, we do not invest in them adequately. Nationwide, the average spending per person for parks is \$78.69/year. Here in Colorado Springs we spend \$50 per person per year. We have one of the smallest full-time park operations and maintenance workforces of all comparable cities. That includes employees per acre of parkland and employees per 10,000 residents.

2B will make critical upgrades in our park system and require NO increase in taxes. 2B is a great investment in our future and that of our children and grandchildren.

Summary of written comments against Issue 2B

Total City revenue, not counting Utilities, is \$610 MILLION yearly. With 480,000 citizens, that cost is \$1270 per person (\$5,080 for an average family of four). That is too much, particularly when the City wants to take our refunds of excess taxation.

Greedy politicians want it all, even that last 1% City revenue increase. Voting "NO" will force the City to be 1% more efficient; that's good.

The ballot title is lawyer trickery. If we vote "NO," we get a \$7 million tax refund. That helps low-income people the most. Don't deprive them of tax relief. The City does not need the \$7 million it demands. If we pay \$7 million more, that is a \$7 million tax increase. Honor the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights and keep our \$7 million for our families. TABOR is why we have the strongest state economy of all 50 states, per a national survey.

A special TOPS tax (off budget) also yearly raises \$7 million for parks. Politicians now want both. Refuse and you get a tax refund, just like in state ballot issues. By returning your overpayment, the City pays you to vote "NO."

The City hired 99 more bureaucrats this year. It is rolling in dough. They need to live on a budget, not a blank check.

Parks has 193.75 employees. Salaries are 64% of department budget. Five employees each take over \$100,000 yearly. Isn't that generous enough?

In 668 parcels, Parks has 8,200 acres inside City limits AND 5,850 acres OUTSIDE City limits. Why do we own land outside the city? This empire-building is outrageous.

The parks department has a generous general fund budget of \$15 million yearly, Plus about 50% more for its TOPS revenue. That growing \$21 million is enough for repairs and maintenance. Parks does not need a one-third bonus to spend on the basics. Think it does? Its true total budget is \$51,632,295--3.5 times its official budget. See city budget, page 20-1. \$3 million for "cultural services," whatever that means; \$9.5 million for "design and development;" \$6.2 million for "recreation and administration." Is the City properly in charge of administering "fun?"

Recent history of total spending on parks: \$41 million (2017), \$44.8 million (2018), amended to \$58.9 million (mid-2018). Employees grew by 19 (over 10%) in two years.

2B is an emotional appeal. Everyone likes parks. Parks should not be held hostage to seize your tax refund. The City can spend more on parks by better prioritizing its \$610 million in rapidly growing revenue. Its salaries are too big. Taxes are too high. The fire department just admitted it overspent \$1+ million, then "found" their problem. We should not pay for financial bungling and corrupt insider political deals by overpaying our taxes.