

City of Longmont Ballot Issues 3A-3D

Oct. 23, 2026

Everything you need to know (quickly) to fill out your local Longmont ballot

City of Longmont Ballot Issue 3A: Public safety tax

What does it mean?

Should property + sales taxes be increased to boost the budget + hiring for police + fire?

What will it cost?

The .33% sales tax would add 33c to a \$100 purchase, or \$3.30 for every \$1,000 purchase made online or physically within the city of Longmont. That includes high-ticket items like cars.

The property tax would add roughly \$75 per year to a home with an assessed value of \$500,000, and \$350 for a commercial property of the same value.

What will the money be used for?

The tax is expected to bring in \$16.5 million next year: \$10.8 from sales tax and \$5.7 from property tax. By 2036, that's expected to grow to more than \$20 million annually

The bulk of the money would go toward hiring more police, emergency dispatchers and firefighting staff: 86 positions in total

- 43 full-time employees for the police department
- 31 for fire
- 12 for support staff

However, that hiring won't happen all at once. It will be phased in over the next 10 years.

Tax money could also be used for public safety equipment, vehicles and facilities, according to the ballot language. The city has the following projects planned:

- New Fire Station 7 on the southwest side of town, with a new fire engine and all the equipment needed
- Rehabilitation and expansion of Fire Station 4
- Two fire rescue trucks and equipment
- Equipment, uniforms and training needed for each new firefighter and police officer
- New storage building for reserve fire apparatus and equipment
- Police vehicles

If the city brings in more money than it anticipates, it would be allowed to keep the extra instead of returning it to taxpayers, as this measure also asks voters to exempt the tax from TABOR. (Learn more about TABOR + refunds [in our Oct. 16 episode](#))

Why you might want to vote for this

- Police + fire have been asking for more money + staffing for years. The last tax increase for public safety was in 2017, when Longmont's population was under 95,000. The city has added nearly 6,000 residents during that time, and is projected to add 3,000-4,000 more by 2030.
- Longmont also has a smaller-than average police force for a city of its size, according to FBI statistics.
- Calls for service have increased 19.5% (police) and 86% (fire) between 2009 and 2025. Overtime is a significant concern and cost for the city, according to officials, contributing to burnout and turnover in the department.

Why you might not want to vote for this

- It is a tax increase. It will add costs to homeowners, business owners and on everything you buy in Longmont or online.
- It's a substantial increase over today's staffing and funding. The number of firefighters and police employees will jump by 28% if 3A passes, and the combined public safety budget will nearly double from \$22 million to \$42 million by 2036. However, that is spread over 10 years, not all at once.
- There is no cap on how much funding this tax can bring in. If revenue exceeds expectations, the city can keep that money but ONLY use it for police and fire (unless they come back to voters and ask to spend it on other things).

More information + resources

- timescall.com/2026/06/24/longmont-sales-property-tax-ballot-election/
- <https://longmontcolorado.gov/information/ballot-information-november-3-2026-election/>

City of Longmont Ballot Issue 3B: Open space disposal

What does it mean?

Should Longmont voters have to approve any "disposal" of open space land in the city?

What does "disposal" mean?

Disposal is a formal process for removing an open space designation from a piece of property.

It can be selling that land, but it could also mean switching the designation and ownership of land from open space to something else. That's because there are restrictions on what open space land can be used for and what structures can be built there.

For instance: If the city wants to use open space for another purpose, like building a school or rec center, the open space property would first need to be "disposed" so something can legally be built on it.

What's the disposal process now?

Laid out in the city code, any disposal must be approved by city council, with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board making an informal recommendation for or against. Transferring open space between departments requires a majority vote; selling it to an outside entity requires a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of council.

Even if 3B passes, city council retains the right to dispose of open space for public roads, utilities, life-safety infrastructure and open space operations. Those will not require voter approval.

Why is this on the ballot now?

Last year, Longmont considered a land swap of two city properties: Distel and Tull. Distel was zoned open space; Toll for utilities purposes.

Longmont proposed making the Toll property open space, and use Distel — currently home to a gravel mining operations — for the construction of a county-owned composting facility. Residents opposed to the swap lobbied city council, who eventually voted unanimously against the deal.

This measure would prevent any similar proposals from being considered in the future, as it would have put this land swap to a vote of the people.

Why you might want to vote for this

- Park lands and property used for water rights already have similar protections under Longmont's charter. This would put the city's 2,006 acres of open space in the same category.
- This would give all voting residents in Longmont a say over what happens with public lands, rather than a small sample who attends city meetings.
- It would prevent future councils from selling or otherwise getting rid of open space.

Why you might not want to vote for this

- Opponents point to the Distel-Tull situation as proof the current system works to protect valuable open space: Residents didn't want the land swap to happen, and city council listened.

- This limits the city's flexibility to pursue projects that further Longmont's sustainability goals, if they involve open space — particularly in partnerships with other governments that might involve the use of city property.
- There is already a provision in city code that requires land swaps to result in a net gain in open space.

More information + resources

- longmontcolorado.gov/information/ballot-information-november-3-2026-election/
- bouldercounty.gov/environment/composting/county-composting-facility/
- boulderreportinglab.org/2025/10/19/longmont-halts-land-swap-discussions-still-open-to-boulder-county-composting-project/

City of Longmont Ballot Issues 3C + 3D: Ranked choice voting + Election year re-alignment

What does it mean?

3C: Should Longmont pick its mayor + city council via multi-winner ranked choice voting, beginning in 2029?

3D: Should Longmont's election cycles be shifted so all at-large candidates are elected at once, and all Ward races are voted on in a separate year?

What is ranked choice voting (RCV), and how does it work?

Rather than picking one candidate, you can rank them in order of preference (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.)

Each "round" of voting eliminates the candidate with the fewest first-place votes. Voters who picked that unpopular candidate then get their second choice votes distributed to the remaining candidates.

Under RCV, a candidate cannot win until they get 50% or more of the vote. (Unlike now, where the person with the most votes wins — even if it's less than 50% support.) The process of redistributing 1st, 2nd, and 3rd-choice votes continues until a candidate has received majority support.

Why you might want to vote for this

- Multi-winner RCV results in more representative government bodies. Elsewhere, it has increased representation for minority voting groups such as women, racial/ethnic groups and ideological minorities).
- 3C ensures the winner has majority support among voters.

- 3D would allow RCV to work the best by putting all the at-large races, and candidates, together.
- RCV has been implemented as a remedy in jurisdictions found to have violated the Fair Voting Act, precisely because it offers proportional representation.
- It gives voters more choice: Instead of picking a single candidate most likely to win, voters select all their preferences.

Why you might not want to vote for this

- RCV is most effective when there are 3 or more candidates for a single seat. If only two people run for the Ward seats or the mayoral spot, its effectiveness is limited. That's been a consistent issue with RCV in smaller communities.
- Voter education will be required on RCV and the election cycle shift to avoid confusion and ballot errors.
- Because of the shift in election cycles, 3D will cut create a one-time cut to two separate 4-year terms, giving those elected officials less time to serve.

More information + resources

- rcvforlongmont.org/
- yellowscene.com/2026/08/12/two-ballot-measures-one-goal-proportional-representation-in-longmont/
- <https://longmontcolorado.gov/information/ballot-information-november-3-2026-election/>
- boulderbeat.news/2023/10/20/mayor-election-2023/
- boulderbeat.news/2020/10/08/boulder-ballot-2e-direct-election-mayor/

Next week

A 20-minute Louisville vote guide

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