



Downtown
Denver
Partnership

2026 BALLOT GUIDE

Vote this November 3.

At the Downtown Denver Partnership, we know that elections - no matter the size or scale - have the power to significantly impact our city and state. We believe it is critically important for voters to cast an educated vote in every election. The Partnership publishes this ballot guide to help you navigate the ballot questions and issues you'll be asked to vote on during this election.

The Downtown Denver Partnership prioritizes ballot measures that could significantly affect the center city. For measures that meet this threshold, The Partnership evaluates each proposal through the lens of its Policy Priorities, with particular consideration given to potential impacts on Downtown Denver and economic competitiveness. This approach led to a focus on ten local and state measures on the November 2026 ballot.

With 21 state and local measures on this year's ballot, we strongly encourage our members and the downtown community to carefully consider each and every issue before casting a vote.

Read on to learn more about the state and local ballot initiatives you'll be deciding on in the November 2026 General Election.

Our Process

Guided by our annual Member feedback survey, our Policy Committee thoroughly evaluates and recommends positions to the Board of Directors. Evaluation is also informed by our unique subject matter expertise in transportation, urban planning, economic development, public health and safety and good governance. We also engage with community and interest groups to understand a variety of perspectives on each issue, and ensure balanced viewpoints are factored into decision making.

Educate Position:

An educate position from the Downtown Denver Partnership is not an endorsement of or opposition to a ballot measure. Instead, it serves as a resource for our Members and Denver voters, offering clear information about how the measure could affect downtown and the broader city, and what questions are worth considering before casting a vote.

Support Position:

The Downtown Denver Partnership fully supports the measure and will advocate for its passage.

Oppose Position:

The Downtown Denver Partnership opposes the measure and includes the rationale and potential impacts on downtown for voter consideration.



More information:
downtowndenver.com/vote

November 2026 Measures of Interest to the Downtown Denver Partnership

Local Measures:

- Referred Question 2H - Wage and Worker Protection Charter Amendment - **EDUCATE**
- Referred Question 2I - Biennial Budget Charter Amendment - **EDUCATE**
- Referred Question 2J - Civil Service Commission Modernization Charter Amendment - **EDUCATE**
- Referred Question 2K - Xcel Franchise Agreement - **SUPPORT**
- Initiated Ordinance 311 - Prohibit the Force Feeding of Birds - **OPPOSE**

State:

- 7A / Colorado Connector Passenger Rail Sales Tax Measure (Front Range Passenger Rail District) - **EDUCATE**
- Proposition NN - TABOR Revenue Cap Increase for K-12 Education - **EDUCATE**
- Proposition 132 / Initiative 85 - Penalties for Fentanyl Crimes - **EDUCATE**
- Amendment 87 / Initiative 195 - Graduated Income Tax - **OPPOSE**
- Proposition 136 / Initiative 232 - Income Tax Rate Cap - **SUPPORT**

Additional Measures in Front of Voters:

- Amendment 81 / Initiative 95 - Law Enforcement Reporting Requirements to Federal Authorities
- Proposition 133 / Initiative 108 - Penalties for Human Trafficking of a Minor
- Proposition 134 / Initiative 109 - Male & Female Participation in School Sports
- Proposition 135 / Initiative 110 - Prohibit Certain Surgeries on Minors
- Amendment 85 / Initiative 234 - Plain Language Ballot Questions
- Amendment 86 / Initiative 256 - Congressional Redistricting
- Amendment 83 / Initiative 302 - Constitutional Right to Hunt and Fish
- Proposition 137 / Initiative 308 - Designate Sporting Goods Sales Tax Revenue for Conservation
- Amendment 84 / Initiative 362 - Mail Ballot Voter Identification
- Amendment 82 / Initiative 177 - Right to Natural Gas

Referred Question 2H - Wage and Worker Protection Charter Amendment

EDUCATE

Referred Question 2H asks Denver voters whether to amend the City Charter to expressly clarify that the Auditor's Office may continue enforcing wage laws, worker protection laws and workplace rights laws as authorized by City Council ordinances. The measure adds a single line to the charter codifying the office's existing enforcement role, which supporters say provides clear and lasting authority for the Auditor's Office to oversee and enforce workplace rights laws.

Though there is no policy change proposed within this measure, The Partnership encourages voters to consider the impact of Charter Amendments because of their significant, long-term impact on how the city functions. Unlike ordinary city ordinances, which City Council can pass or amend on its own, changes to the City Charter require voter approval.

Referred Question 2I - Biennial Budget Charter Amendment

EDUCATE

Referred Question 2I asks Denver voters whether to amend the City Charter to change the city's budget and appropriation process. The amendment would allow City Council to adopt two-year (biennial) budgets and would modernize or repeal certain charter sections tied to the current process. Council would still approve spending annually, and the city could return to annual budgeting during periods of economic uncertainty.

A two-year cycle is intended to improve long-range planning, increase public engagement and allow more time for strategic review of city spending priorities. Longer budget cycles also raise questions about how they might affect financial forecasting and the frequency of policy-level budget reviews.

Though a two-year budget cycle has potential benefit to the city as a whole and follows good governance, The Partnership encourages voters to consider the impact of Charter Amendments because of their significant, long-term impact on how the city functions. Unlike ordinary city ordinances, which City Council can pass or amend on its own, changes to the City Charter require voter approval.

Referred Question 2J - Civil Service Commission Modernization Charter Amendment

EDUCATE

Referred Question 2J asks Denver voters whether to amend the City Charter to modernize the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Safety. The amendment would remove outdated charter language, allow City Council to add duties to the Commission and Department through city code, and provide for an extension of probation when required for medical, military or other approved leave. Together, these changes update the governance, disciplinary procedures, personnel rules and administrative provisions of the civil service system that covers Denver's police and fire employees and aligns with current municipal code and Department of Safety operations.

Though this measure is internal to city functions, The Partnership encourages voters to consider the impact of Charter Amendments because of their significant, long-term impact on how the city functions. Unlike ordinary city ordinances, which City Council can pass or amend on its own, changes to the City Charter require voter approval.

Referred Question 2K - Xcel Franchise Agreement

SUPPORT

Referred Question 2K asks Denver voters whether to approve a 20-year franchise agreement between the City of Denver and Xcel Energy, beginning January 1, 2027.

The agreement would allow Xcel to continue its program for undergrounding overhead electrical lines, maintaining infrastructure safety and coordinating with the city on emergency management. It would also require Xcel to continue paying the city for reasonable use of public rights-of-way and other city property needed to provide safe and reliable utility services.

Why vote **YES**?

Our center city depends on reliable and resilient energy infrastructure. Referred Question 2K would give downtown employers, developers and property owners long-term certainty in Xcel Energy's services. Xcel would cover the cost of major utility relocations for construction projects, valued at about \$150 million annually, which supports the public and private investment that keeps downtown growing. The agreement would also deliver about \$34 million per year in franchise fees to the city and about \$10 million per year to bury overhead power lines.

The revised Energy Partnership Agreement includes additions to the 2025 proposal that City Council advocated for. These include a one-time \$2.5 million shareholder-funded contribution for utility bill assistance in 2027, annual funding for low-income energy assistance and energy-resource navigation, independent audits every three years, expanded public reporting and transparency requirements and investments to improve the neighborhood compatibility of future utility facilities.

It also strengthens Denver's ability to participate in Colorado Public Utilities Commission proceedings, so the city can advocate for residents and businesses in utility rate and infrastructure cases. Rejecting the agreement would begin an uncertain period of extensions and renegotiation with no guarantee of a better deal.

Initiated Ordinance 311 - Prohibit the Force Feeding of Birds

OPPOSE

Initiated Ordinance 311 asks Denver voters whether to ban the production and sale of products that involve the force-feeding of birds, such as foie gras. The ban would apply only within the City and County of Denver. Its principal effect would be on restaurants and grocery stores which would have to remove items like foie gras from their offerings and could face fines of up to \$5,000 or loss of city licenses for violations.

Why vote **NO**?

Downtown restaurants and the patrons of several establishments would be directly affected by this measure. The Partnership is generally concerned with proposals that impose new restrictions and penalties on businesses operating in an already challenging economic environment, particularly within the restaurant industry. In addition, this proposal sets a concerning precedent for future restrictions on other lawful agricultural or food products. Importantly, the ordinance would place Denver businesses at a competitive disadvantage relative to their counterparts in surrounding jurisdictions.

District Measure 7A - Colorado Connector Passenger Rail Sales Tax Measure

EDUCATE

Front Range Passenger Rail District Measure 7A asks voters within the district to approve a 0.333% regional sales tax to fund the operation, maintenance and expansion of the proposed Colorado Connector (CoCo) passenger rail system. The daily regional train would serve communities up and down the Front Range from Pueblo to Fort Collins. The tax would fund the southern portion of the route between Denver and Pueblo, which is proposed to begin service in 2032, along with increased train frequency, station upgrades and local improvements throughout the system. It would also fund a new station in Trinidad served by Amtrak's Southwest Chief long-distance service between Los Angeles and Chicago.

The Partnership is a strong supporter of transit, increased accessibility to and from downtown, support of our sports, arts and entertainment venues, and regional connectivity. We also hold affordability, efficiency and the importance of RTD's fiscal and operational health as top priorities. We encourage voters to consider these values combined and evaluate trade-offs.

Proposition NN – TABOR Revenue Cap Increase for K-12 Education

EDUCATE

Proposition NN asks Colorado voters whether to raise the cap on the amount of tax revenue the state is allowed to keep each year under the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR). The measure would allow the state to retain and spend a portion of revenue it already collects that would otherwise be refunded to individuals and businesses under TABOR. The measure will increase the TABOR cap by \$4.6 billion, making additional dollars available to the state without raising taxes. The funding is directed primarily toward K-12 education benefits, including teacher pay and retention, smaller class sizes, workforce readiness, career and technical education, and child-focused programs. It's estimated that the higher cap would increase K-12 education funding up to 50% over the next 10 years.

While The Partnership actively supports quality education choices for all in downtown, particularly within Denver Public Schools, it's important for voters to consider the limited length of the potential K-12 contribution and specificity of use.

Proposition 132 / Initiative 85 – Penalties for Fentanyl Crimes

EDUCATE

Proposition 132 proposes changing state law to impose stricter penalties for the possession and distribution of fentanyl. The measure would make possession of any amount of fentanyl a level 4 drug felony with the option for the conviction to be vacated if the person completes a treatment program. Currently, possession of one gram or less of fentanyl is a misdemeanor for first, second and third offenses. Under this proposition, possession with intent to distribute would become a level 1 drug felony which carries a mandatory prison sentence of 8 to 32 years. It would also increase penalties for people who possess a substance without knowing it contains fentanyl.

A safe, clean and beautiful downtown is The Partnership's number one priority. The impact of fentanyl on vulnerable individuals and the greater community is unquestionable, requiring a variety of tools, from outreach and rehabilitation programs to enforcement.

With this particular measure, we encourage voters to evaluate impact on existing tools that are working, impact on our jails and justice system and ultimate efficacy in addressing the root issues.

Amendment 87 / Initiative 195 - Graduated Income Tax

OPPOSE

Amendment 87 would amend the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) and replace Colorado's longstanding flat income tax structure at 4.4% with a graduated income tax system. If amended, the state would retain up to \$2.7 billion by taxing individuals and businesses with taxable income above \$500,000 with six ascending rates.

Why vote **NO**?

Establishing downtown as an economic hub that can compete with the nation's leading cities for jobs, investment and talent is central to The Partnership's advocacy work.

The Partnership opposes Amendment 87 because it would weaken Colorado's competitive position at a time when states and regions across the country are aggressively pursuing employers, investment and high-skilled workers. While Colorado's economic success has been built in part on a stable and predictable tax environment, Amendment 87 introduces higher tax burdens. The potential impact on in-migration, business expansion, job creation, entrepreneurial activity and corporate location decisions creates unnecessary economic risk during a period when retaining and attracting employers remains critical to the state's long-term prosperity.

Furthermore, Amendment 87 would be a Constitutional Amendment. The Partnership encourages voters to consider the impact of Constitutional Amendments because of their significant, long-term impact on how the State functions.

Proposition 136 - Income Tax Rate Cap

SUPPORT

Proposition 136 would permanently cap Colorado's individual and corporate income tax at 4.4% unless voted to change through a future ballot measure.

Why vote **YES**?

This measure is a response to Amendment 87 to eliminate Colorado's flat income tax and create a graduated income tax.

The Downtown Denver Partnership is committed to minimizing regulatory and cost burdens whenever possible, ensuring the choice to stay here and continue to contribute to our economy is an easy one. Flat income tax provides certainty and affordability to Colorado businesses and residents, reinforcing the state's economic competitiveness.

Amendment 81/ Initiative 95 - Law Enforcement Reporting Requirements to Federal Authorities

Amendment 81 asks Colorado voters whether to amend the state constitution to require state and local law enforcement to notify the U.S. Department of Homeland Security when certain criminal defendants' immigration status cannot be determined. The notification requirement would apply when a person is charged with a violent crime, or with any crime if the person has a prior felony conviction, and it is unclear whether the person is in the country legally. Note that Amendment 81 would be a Constitutional Amendment, and The Partnership encourages voters to consider the impact of Constitutional Amendments because of their significant, long-term impact on how the State functions.

Proposition 133 / Initiative 108 - Penalties for Human Trafficking of a Minor

Proposition 133 asks Colorado voters whether to change state law to increase the penalties for human trafficking of a minor for sexual servitude. The measure would expand the definition of the crime to include knowingly trading anything of monetary value to buy or sell sexual activity with a minor and increase the penalty for these convictions to life in prison without parole or release.

Proposition 134 / Initiative 109 - Male & Female Participation in School Sports

Proposition 134 asks Colorado voters whether to require that school and athletic-association sports teams be designated as male, female or coeducational, defined by aspects of the person's biological reproductive system. The measure would apply to interscholastic and intramural sports at schools and colleges in Colorado, from elementary school through higher education, including public, private and religious institutions.

Proposition 135 / Initiative 110 - Prohibit Certain Surgeries on Minors

Proposition 135 asks Colorado voters whether to prohibit certain gender-transition surgical procedures for people under 18. The measure would also restrict public funding and insurance coverage for those procedures and change what procedures health care providers can offer to minors.

Amendment 85 / Initiative 234 - Plain Language Ballot Questions

Amendment 85 asks Colorado voters whether to require that state and local ballot questions be written in plain language, at or below an eighth grade reading level. The requirement would apply to measures placed before voters by both state and local governments. Note that Amendment 85 would be a Constitutional Amendment, and The Partnership encourages voters to consider the impact of Constitutional Amendments because of their significant, long-term impact on how the State functions.

Amendment 86 / Initiative 256 - Congressional Redistricting

Amendment 86 asks Colorado voters whether to preserve the state's independent congressional redistricting process. If passed, the amendment would establish more restrictions on redrawing congressional maps. Note that Amendment 86 would be a Constitutional Amendment, and The Partnership encourages voters to consider the impact of Constitutional Amendments because of their significant, long-term impact on how the State functions.

Amendment 83 / Initiative 302 - Constitutional Right to Hunt and Fish

Amendment 83 asks Colorado voters whether to establish hunting and fishing as constitutional rights and as preferred tools for wildlife management. Note that Amendment 83 would be a Constitutional Amendment, and The Partnership encourages voters to consider the impact of Constitutional Amendments because of their significant, long-term impact on how the State functions.

Proposition 137 / Initiative 308 - Designate Sporting Goods Sales Tax Revenue for Conservation

Proposition 137 asks Colorado voters whether to direct a portion of existing sporting goods sales tax revenue to conservation, water, forest and outdoor recreation programs. It would not create a new tax. It would dedicate part of the revenue the state already collects to these programs.

Amendment 84 / Initiative 362 - Mail Ballot Voter Identification

Amendment 84 asks Colorado voters whether to require voters casting mail ballots to provide identifying information, specifically the last four digits of their driver's license or Social Security number, along with a signature. Colorado conducts elections primarily by mail, so the requirement would add a second verification step to the way most voters currently participate. Note that Amendment 84 would be a Constitutional Amendment, and The Partnership encourages voters to consider the impact of Constitutional Amendments because of their significant, long-term impact on how the State functions.

Amendment 82 / Initiative 177 - Right to Natural Gas

Amendment 82 asks Colorado voters whether to establish a constitutional right for consumers to purchase natural gas and for utilities to provide natural gas services to homes and businesses. Natural gas, also known as methane, is used by consumers for cooking and heating.