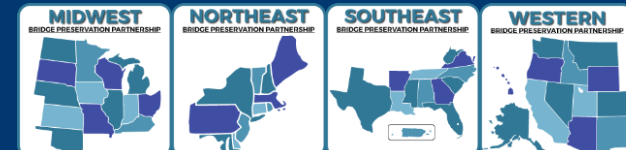




National Bridge Preservation Conference 2024

Public Outreach + Ballot Initiatives:
How to be Successful Raising Public Dollars
For Infrastructure Projects



Public Engagement

1. Plan

2. Engage + Educate

3. Ask

Plan

1. Do your research

- Identify your audience
- Create your core messaging

2. Develop your strategy

- Outline tactics
- Assign roles
- Create timelines

Engage + Educate

Be authentic

- Find your voice
- Don't be afraid of emotions

Present compelling messages clearly and consistently

- Webpage, Mail, Digital Newsletter, Paid Ads, Social Media, Presentations, Open House Meetings, etc.
- Logo/brand

Ask

Have a clear ask + alternative

- Write your ballot question with bullets and clear everyday language
- Include details of what a Yes vote means
- Describe what will happen if your ballot question fails

Case Study

Sales tax increase for the City of Littleton, Colorado

Overview

GOALS

1. Increase awareness of the problem among citizens
2. Engage citizens in a conversation about potential solutions

TIMELINE (13 weeks)

- Late May – soft launch
- June – integrate messaging about the problem into all platforms and communication
- July & August – focus on proposed solutions and gathering input

In early May only 37% of citizens were aware of the city's revenue challenge

Approach

- **Leverage city-owned platforms:** website, Littleton Report, Facebook, YouTube, and Open Littleton
- **Reach people at home:** direct mail of large-scale fact sheet and city council letter/postcard
- **Find opportunities for personal interaction:** State of the City, Meet Eat and Greet events, Telephone Town Hall, commission and committee presentations
- **Target people in social media:** promoted posts and targeted ads on Facebook, Littleton Independent print ads, 9News web and app banners

Organic Reach

Website

Launched May 21 and served as the portal for all information sharing

- Fact sheet
- FAQ
- Platforms for input

2,496 unique visitors through August 25; top referrals include:

- (1) Direct link [people type the URL in their browser] (2) Google (3) 9News, (4) Facebook, (5) Twitter

The screenshot shows the Littleton Colorado website. The header includes the city logo and navigation links: My Littleton, City Services, Building & Development, Business Resources, Connect With Us, and I Want To... The main content area features a sidebar with a menu of links such as Funding Fix FAQs, 2021 Election Information, Bemis Library, City Council, City Events, Community Links, Cupola Cam, Demographics, Census 2020, COVID-19 information, Resources and Assistance, Envision Littleton, Historic Preservation, Littleton Museum, Littleton History, Littleton 8 TV, and a Map Gallery. The main article is titled 'Littleton Funding Fix' and discusses a \$6.5 million revenue shortage. It includes a sub-section for 'Funding Fix FAQs' with links to read the fact sheet, review frequently asked questions, take a survey, and email questions. A 'Littleton Funding Fix' logo is also present. On the right, there are sections for 'EVENTS/MEETINGS' and 'CITY NEWS' with various upcoming events and news items.

Littleton Report

Print edition: mailed to 26,000+ households and businesses

- 2 front page stories

Online edition: emailed weekly to 3,500 subscribers

- 7 online stories



Council Eyes Options for Funding Fix

Throughout the spring and summer, city council and the leadership team have honed-in on a set of options to alleviate Littleton's projected annual \$6.5 million revenue shortfall in its Capital Projects Fund.

Though no decision has been made, options under serious consideration involve a new tax or tax-rate increases that would require voter approval in November. On August 26, council wants to hear from citizens on the following potential solutions:

- **Increasing the retail marijuana tax rate** — would generate an additional \$500,000 to \$1 million per year
- **Instituting a new lodging tax** — charging hotel patrons and short-term rental guests a new tax that could generate up to \$1 million per year
- **Increasing the sales tax rate by 0.5%** — a half-percent increase would generate an average of \$6.5 million per year and cost an additional \$0.50 on a \$100 purchase
- **Increasing the sales tax rate by 0.75%** — a three-quarter percent increase would generate an average of \$10 million per year and cost an additional \$0.75 on a \$100 purchase

The notion of closing the Bemis Public Library and the Littleton Museum illustrated the depth of the problem during a 10-week research and community engagement effort, but both Mayor Jerry Valdes and City Manager Mark Relph have said closing treasured community assets like the library and museum do not represent a reasonable or realistic solution.

"We'd be gutting a lot of the culture of this community," Relph said at a June 30 Telephone Town Hall meeting in response to citizen questions and concerns.



Time for a Funding Fix

The value Littleton places on small government, low taxes, and independent retail is both a blessing and a challenge. It means shoppers — both residents and visitors alike — have access to unique, locally-owned stores while paying among the lowest sales tax rates (which haven't gone up in nearly 50 years) in the metro area. But it also means that city coffers don't benefit from the large volume of sales tax revenue generated by multiple big box retailers that fund critical capital projects.

This lack of high-volume retailers and revenue diversity, in addition to rising infrastructure maintenance and repair demands, adds up to an annual estimated shortfall of \$6.5 million in the city's Capital Projects Fund — which pays for street maintenance, building repairs, intersection improvements, and equipment that touches residents every day. Without intervention, this fund is projected to be depleted by 2023.

In late April, the city launched a new community research and education initiative to explore solutions and gauge citizen support in making this serious revenue shortage. "Littleton Funding Fix: It's Up To Us" invites citizens to learn about the problem, proposed solutions, and take part in a community dialogue throughout the spring and summer.

This initiative kicked off with polling in early May, followed by a series of public meetings in the city council on May 18. The consultant team leading this work will present results and recommendations to council at a study session July 27. Ultimately, voters could have an opportunity to decide on the fix on their November ballot.

The goal is to find a sustainable and smart solution. Residents are encouraged to get involved at www.littletonfundingfix.org, where they'll find answers to frequently asked questions, results from the polls, and dates for upcoming meetings which may include a Telephone Town Hall.

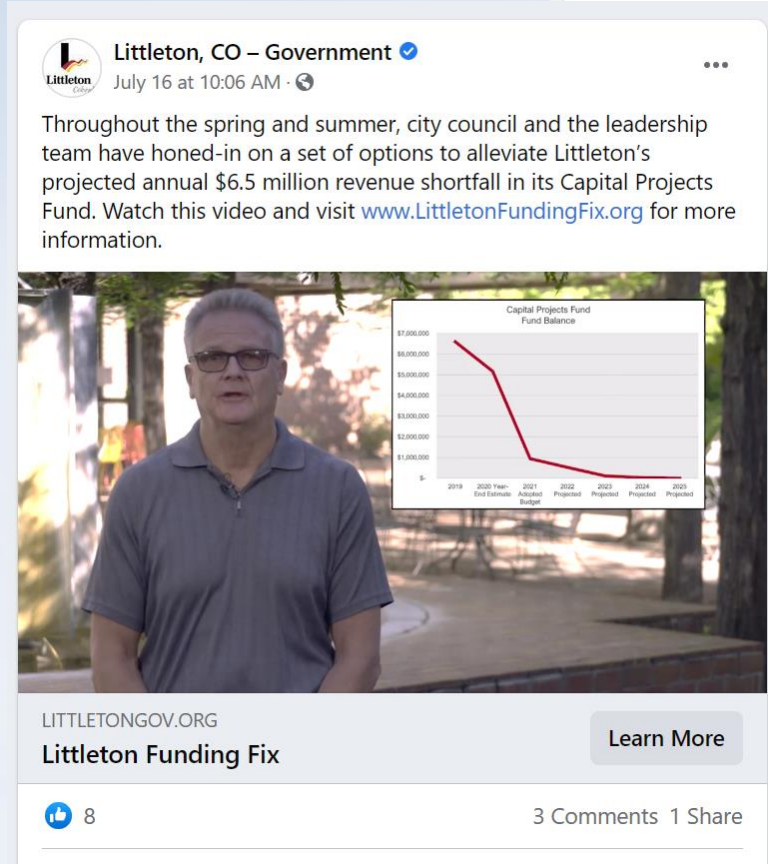


Facebook

9,000+ followers

11 posts May 21 to August 4

Total reach = 589



Presentations + Meetings

Presentations

120+ attendees
June 9 | State of the City

40+ attendees
June - July | Boards, Commissions,
and Committees

- Planning Commission
- Transportation Mobility Board
- Historical Preservation Board
- Arts & Culture Committee
- NextGen Advisory Committee



Telephone Town Hall

Wednesday, June 30

The Littleton Center Council Chamber

334 participants

- 304 on the phone
- 30 streaming video
- 21 questions answered live
- 5,400 total phone and video engagement minutes



Direct Mail

Two Mail Pieces

2-Page Fact Sheet: mailed to 26,000+ households and businesses

City Council Letter: mailed to 26,000+ households and businesses

THE PROBLEM The City of Littleton is faced with an annual \$6.5 million revenue shortage in its Capital Projects Fund. This deficit is due to a growing backlog of infrastructure and maintenance projects, requirements to modernize safety equipment, and limited revenue sources.

Repairs to Littleton's roads, bridges, sidewalks, and medians have been deferred due to limited revenue. Many major intersections are over capacity, making traffic worse. Almost every city building is several decades old and in need of maintenance and repair, including one with a roof in such bad condition it collapsed under heavy snow. To comply with state law and maximize transparency, Littleton police need modern public safety equipment, including state-mandated body cameras for all officers.

CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND

Without new revenue to address these ongoing needs, Littleton's Capital Projects Fund is projected to be depleted by 2025.

THE DETAILS

Littleton's Capital Projects Fund pays for road and building maintenance and improvements, technology upgrades, and equipment that touches residents every day. There are several reasons the fund is projected to be depleted in just four years:

- Increasing Capital and Infrastructure Demands** - Littleton's list of unstarted capital and infrastructure projects totals \$65 million over the next 15 years (\$6.5 million per year). In sum, the city's 2021 budget identifies over 70 capital and infrastructure projects that need funding between now and 2035. Some of these estimated costs include major expenditures such as:
 - \$2 MILLION** to fund repairs and updates to the courthouse, Town Hall Arts Center, Barnes Public Library and the Littleton Museum
 - \$7.5 MILLION** for technology upgrades, fiber network connections, police and public works radios and equipment
 - \$18.2 MILLION** for public safety equipment and city fleet vehicles - this subtotal does not address state-mandated body cameras
 - \$19.6 MILLION** for maintenance, repairs and replacement of city-owned buildings
 - \$50.3 MILLION** to maintain and improve the quality of Littleton's roads, sidewalks, and medians - and fix major intersections like Santa Fe Drive and West Mineral Avenue

The city's Capital Projects Fund - which should pay for these projects - only brings in about \$6 million each year, about half of which is earmarked for street maintenance. As the network of streets, sidewalks, medians, and bridges has grown over the years, that \$3.1 million earmarked for street maintenance now meets only about 25 percent of the need in 2021.

2. Rising Maintenance And Repair Costs - When critical capital improvement projects are designed, the materials, labor, and other associated costs to fix roads, repair buildings, and update technology keep going up. For example, the cost to regularly maintain one mile of any given city street is \$100,000. If maintenance on that same mile is delayed by three to five years, the street needs to be completely rebuilt at a cost of \$1 million. The ability to make timely repairs to city streets and buildings will be less costly.

3. Unreliable Revenue Streams - The main sources of revenue for the Capital Projects Fund are not adequate to address both the backlog of projects and anticipated funding needs.

- Revenue from building use tax that developers and homeowners pay when new structures are approved is highly volatile and averages only about \$1.5 million per year. Because Littleton has no room to grow, substantial growth in Building Use Tax Revenue is unlikely.
- Littleton's share of the revenue from the Highway Users Tax - or gas tax - which comes from federal and state sources, isn't enough to make up for the shortage. As more hybrid and electric vehicles replace older vehicles, these funds become less reliable.
- There is not enough sales tax revenue to fund increasing demands. Unlike neighboring cities with many "big box" retailers, Littleton has only two large-format retail stores within the city limits. Littleton values its small locally owned retailers, but they don't generate the volume of sales tax the city needs.

4. Fewer Fees & Taxes - and a low sales tax rate. The city has not increased its sales tax rate in more than 50 years. At three percent, Littleton's sales tax rate is lower than the metro-wide average of three and a half percent. Unlike other cities, Littleton does not collect street maintenance fees, street lighting fees, business license fees, a lodging tax, or grocery taxes.

THE FIX

Last year, city council asked all departments to cut \$2 million to help offset a 40 percent reduction in sales tax revenue due to the pandemic. The budgeting was in addition to many other cost-saving measures the city implemented. Unfortunately, there are very few solutions that decrease the budget drastically enough to stabilize the Capital Projects Fund and still keep the city functioning at a level our citizens and businesses expect.

Even eliminating the Barnes Public Library and the Littleton Museum, which are beloved community assets, is not sufficient. That would create a savings in the General Fund and not in the Capital Projects Fund.

We must find a sustainable and smart revenue solution. City leadership is engaging the community in a conversation about the following potential solutions:

- A retail marijuana tax increase would provide \$500,000 to \$1 million per year
- A lodging tax - which Littleton does not currently collect - on hotel and short-term rental guests could generate up to \$1 million per year
- A 0.5% increase in the sales tax rate (\$0.50 on a \$100 purchase) would generate an average of \$6.5 million annually in new revenue
- A 0.75% increase in the sales tax rate (\$0.75 on a \$100 purchase) would generate an average of \$10 million annually in new revenue
- Eliminating community assets like Barnes Public Library and the Littleton Museum would create an annual savings of \$4.2 million in the General Fund

Without new revenue to address these ongoing needs, Littleton's Capital Projects Fund is projected to be depleted by 2025.

Please get involved and learn more at: LittletonFundingFix.org

Littleton Colorado
2255 West Berry Avenue
Littleton, CO 80120

ECRWSS
Postal Patron

HAVE A SAY IN LITTLETON'S FUNDING FIX
Citizens are invited to learn more about this issue and provide input. There are numerous opportunities. Visit www.LittletonFundingFix.org where you'll be able to:

- Review a fact sheet and read answers to frequently asked questions
- Take a two-question survey
- Submit questions for the website FAQ
- Mark your calendars for the August 26 special meeting and public hearing

August 2021
DEAR LITTLETON RESIDENTS,

As you may have heard by now, the City of Littleton is faced with an annual \$6.5 million revenue shortage in its Capital Projects Fund. Without intervention, this Fund is set to be depleted in just four years.

This deficit is due to a growing backlog of infrastructure and maintenance projects, rising labor and maintenance costs, requirements to modernize public safety equipment, and limited and flattening revenue sources.

While individual council members may have a difference of opinion on some policy matters facing Littleton, there is no disagreement among city council on the severity of the revenue problem in the Capital Projects Fund.

At 6:30 p.m. Thursday, August 26, city council is convening a special meeting to make a final decision on a solution to this revenue problem. We are writing to encourage you to learn more about this urgent issue and provide your feedback.

Please go to www.LittletonFundingFix.org to learn more. You will find answers to frequently asked questions and other information. Then, share your questions, comments, and suggestions prior to August 26 - or in person during the city council meeting at the Littleton Center at 2255 W. Berry Ave.

Whichever way you choose to participate, we are eager to hear your feedback. Thank you in advance for your participation. We look forward to your response!

Sincerely,
Littleton City Council

Jerry Valdes
Jerry Valdes, Mayor, District II

Scott Melin
Scott Melin, Mayor Pro Tem, At Large

Patrick Driscoll
Patrick Driscoll, District I

Carol Fey
Carol Fey, District III

Kelly Millman
Kelly Millman, District IV

Pam Grove
Pam Grove, At Large

Mark Rudnicki
Mark Rudnicki, At Large



Paid Advertising

Results

Littleton Independent

- Half-page print ads August 5 + 9
 - **5,650 subscribers**
- Letter from Mark August 20
 - **25,000 subscribers**
 - **4,710 opens, 600 clicks** to the Funding Fix website

9News

- Four sizes of banner ads on 9news.com and the app August 5 – 25
- Over **1.1 million impressions** delivered
- **615 clicks** to the Funding Fix website


Facebook

- Two different ads running July 30 – August 25
- **19,266 impressions** and **6,620 unique individuals** reached
- **253 clicks** to the Funding Fix webpage

Sample Placements

Littleton, CO – Government Sponsored

Littleton has a growing backlog of infrastructure and maintenance projects, resulting in poor conditions on [...See More](#)



LITTLETONFUNDINGFIX.ORG
Protect the quality of life we have in Littleton [LEARN MORE](#)



Littleton, CO – Government Sponsored

Congested intersections, buildings in need of repair, and inadequate roads and sidewalks are just a few consequences of a serious revenue shortage affecting our city.

The Littleton Funding Fix is a plan to identify new revenue streams to ensure we maintain the great quality of life residents want and deserve.

On August 26, the Littleton City Council will hear from the public on potential solutions and may decide on a path forward. We invite you to participate. Visit [Little...](#) [See More](#)

LITTLETONFUNDINGFIX.ORG
Have a say about Littleton's funding crisis
The City of Littleton is facing a serious revenue shortage due to rising infrastructure... [Learn More](#)

10 26 Comments 3 Shares

Like Comment Share

Littleton Colorado

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM LITTLETON CITY MANAGER MARK RELPH

Dear Littleton residents,

As the city manager of Littleton, it's my duty to ensure we have the proper resources to maintain the great quality of life residents expect and deserve. This includes staffing, funding, and equipment for critical infrastructure that touches citizens every day. Examples include:

- Road, bridge, median, sidewalk, and pedestrian safety improvements
- Modernizing public safety, including increased transparency with body cameras
- Maintenance of valued city assets such as the Berns Public Library and the Littleton Museum
- Compliance with the American for Disabilities Act across city-owned buildings
- Upgrading technology and connecting fiber networks among critical facilities

These projects are paid for out of the city's Capital Projects Fund. However, due to a growing backlog of infrastructure and maintenance projects, rising labor and maintenance costs, and limited and falling revenue sources, this fund is short \$6.5 million annually – and will be depleted four years from now without intervention.

Now, this issue is not new. In fact, it's been brewing for a couple years. And the city council members you elected are stepping up to find a sustainable solution. Over the past several months, they've taken a hard look at a number of ways to generate new revenue that will provide long-term stability in the Capital Projects Fund. It's important to note that this is not a spending issue. We cannot cut our way out of this. In fact, we've identified about 70 projects that are in need of funding over the next 15 years to the tune of about \$98 million. These are critical infrastructure and capital projects that can no longer be delayed.

Just last week during the city council's study session, members narrowed the options they had been seriously considering to two measures, one of which could end up on the November ballot for voter approval:

A half-cent increase to the sales tax on an additional \$5.00 on a \$100 purchase that would generate an average of \$6.5 million annually in new revenue.	or	A three-quarters cent increase to the sales tax rate on an additional \$5.75 on a \$100 purchase that would generate an average of \$13 million annually in new revenue.
--	----	--

Littleton consumers currently pay three percent on retail items (food, household goods, and pharmaceuticals are exempt), which is lower than the metro-wide average of about three-and-a-half percent.

At 6:30 p.m. on August 26, city council will convene a special meeting and public hearing where they will listen to input from citizens and deliberate on the two options in front of them before voting on how to proceed. Citizens are encouraged to participate. And in the meantime, you can find much more detail on our website, [www.LittletonFundingFix.org](#), and ways to provide your input prior to the public hearing.

Thank you for your attention to, and participation in, this matter.
Sincerely,
Mark Relph | City Manager

Littleton Colorado
[www.LittletonFundingFix.org](#)

You are receiving this email because you have signed up to receive 3rd party partner promotions. Your web browser has been found to have installed cookies from [www.LittletonFundingFix.org](#).
Or send postal to PO 02850 #45781 Mont, R. 30 102-5520

Littleton Colorado

HAVE A SAY IN LITTLETON'S FUNDING FIX

The City of Littleton is faced with an annual \$6.5 million revenue shortage in its Capital Projects Fund. Without intervention, this Fund is set to be depleted four years from now.

City council is considering four proposed revenue options to help alleviate this shortfall and provide long-term stability in the Capital Projects Fund. In late August, this council may vote to move forward with one or more of the following options, all of which would require voter approval in November.

INCREASING THE RETAIL MARIJUANA TAX This tax is too new to determine how much it would generate, but it would likely be insignificant compared to the shortfall.	INSTITUTING A NEW LODGING TAX Charging hotel and conference patrons and short-term rental guests a new tax would generate up to \$1 million per year.
INCREASING THE SALES TAX RATE BY 0.5% A half-percent increase would generate an average of \$6.5 million per year and cost an additional \$0.50 on a \$100 purchase.	INCREASING THE SALES TAX RATE BY 0.75% A three-quarters percent increase would generate an average of \$10 million per year and cost an additional \$0.75 on a \$100 purchase.

Citizens are invited to learn more about this issue and provide input. There are numerous opportunities. Visit [www.LittletonFundingFix.org](#) where you'll be able to:

- Review a fact sheet and read answers to frequently asked questions
- Take a two-question survey
- Submit questions for the website FAQ

SPECIAL MEETING: The Littleton City Council is convening a special meeting and public hearing on Thursday, August 26 at 6:30 at the Littleton City Center, 2255 W Berry Ave. to give the public an opportunity to weigh in on the proposed solutions.

[www.LittletonFundingFix.org](#)

Sample Placements

This screenshot shows the 9NEWS website interface. The navigation bar includes 'News', 'Weather', 'Sports', 'Connect', and 'Watch Live'. A red 'BREAKING NEWS' banner is at the top. The main content area features several article thumbnails: 'Man believed to be responsible for 50 post office break-ins sent to federal prison', 'They lied to me, threatened me, made money off of me', 'Colorado health officials give COVID update after largest increase in cases since May', and '9 Things to do in Colorado this weekend: August 20-22'. A large red advertisement for 'HAVE A SAY IN LITTLETON'S FUNDING FIX' is prominently displayed on the right side of the page.



This screenshot shows the 9NEWS website with a weather forecast for Denver and several news articles. The 'WATCH LIVE' banner is present. A red advertisement for 'HAVE A SAY IN LITTLETON'S FUNDING FIX' is placed on the right side of the page, next to a news article about a mansion sale.

This screenshot shows the 9NEWS website with news articles about carbon dioxide levels and the U.S. census. A red advertisement for 'HAVE A SAY IN LITTLETON'S FUNDING FIX' is placed on the right side of the page, below the main news content.

Citizen + Stakeholder Feedback

Influencer Interviews

- March 22 – May 7
- 97 contacted
- 57 agreed to an interview
 - 26 females, 31 males
 - 10 former elected officials
 - 18 business owners or private sector employees
 - 15 nonprofit or public sector employees
 - 17 citizens without any specific affiliation

“People don’t have a sense of urgency... they need to be told what the consequences are if we don’t get the capital projects funded.”

Email + Web Inquires

- Launched dedicated web page and email on May 21
- 45 inquires through August 24, ranging from feedback to questions
- Of the proposed / discussed solutions:
 - 10 were concerned with the potential closing of the library and/or museum
 - 6 support an increase to the retail marijuana tax
 - 6 support a new lodging tax
 - 6 support a sales tax rate increase in general (did not specify a percentage)
 - 5 support a .75% increase to the sales tax rate
 - 1 supports a .5% increase to the sales tax rate

“It’s excellent to have this issue addressed and yes, please move forward with fixing it and getting residents involved... No one likes taxes, but they’re a practically unavoidable revenue source.”

Additional Survey via Open Littleton

- Launch August 2
- 2,200 subscribers
- 360 responses through August 24

Littleton's Funding Fix

What proposed new revenue options do you prefer?

No deadline is currently set

Introduction Feedback Your Response Outcome

The City of Littleton is faced with an annual \$6.5 million revenue shortage in its Capital Projects Fund. This deficit is due to a growing backlog of infrastructure and maintenance projects, rising costs of materials, and increasing labor costs. In August, city council will consider several options to address this funding gap, including: increasing the sales tax rate; increasing the lodging tax rate; increasing the retail marijuana tax rate; and increasing the tax on short-term rentals. In an effort to better understand your preferences, we are conducting a survey.

Littleton's Funding Fix

What proposed new revenue options do you prefer?

No deadline is currently set

Your Response Introduction Feedback Outcome

[Take the Survey](#)

Based on what you know right now, which of the following do you support? Select all that apply.

- A retail marijuana tax rate increase (this tax is too new to determine how much it would generate, but it would likely be insignificant compared to the shortfall)
- A new lodging tax on hotel and short-term rental guests that could bring in up to one million dollars a year
- A half-cent increase in the sales tax rate (\$0.50 on a \$100 purchase) that would generate an average of \$6.5 million annually in new revenue
- A three-quarters cent increase in the sales tax rate (\$0.75 on a \$100 purchase) that would generate an average of \$10 million annually in new revenue
- None of these solutions

Tell us the primary reason for your selection(s).

Characters left: 75

Public Response

“I believe strongly in Littleton,
and this tax would not be out
of line.” *Regarding the half-cent increase*

“Sales tax increase result[s] in
largest revenue without a huge
burden.” *Regarding both sales tax increases*

Summary

- Successfully passed a ballot question for a .75% sales tax rate increase - raising \$6.5 million annually
- [Ballot issue 3A passed](#) with 59% support - the first sales tax increase in 50 years
- One year later we helped pass a new 5% [lodging tax](#) with 64% support that will generate about \$1 million annually for city-wide public arts and cultural facilities and programs



Reach Out to Learn More

bryandavid@publicalignment.com

(720) 939-0480

PublicAlignment.com

