

## City of Asheville 2024 General Obligation Bond Referendum – FAQ

### Q: What is a Bond Referendum?

A: A bond referendum allows voters to decide whether their local government should issue new debt to fund specific projects. For Asheville, the 2024 bond referendums will be general obligation bonds, meaning they are backed by the full faith and credit of the City and repaid through taxes or other revenues.

### Q: Why Issue Bonds?

A: Issuing bonds allows the City to generate additional revenue to fund critical projects that address both current and long-term community needs. By approving these bonds, the City can prioritize and expedite important projects that might otherwise be delayed, ensuring that our community infrastructure is improved and maintained. General obligation bonds are a commonly used and effective method for cities to invest in their communities and enhance public services. Municipal bonds are among the most secure funding methods available. With Asheville's outstanding credit rating (AAA from Standard & Poor's), the City enjoys favorable low-interest rates on its bond issuances.

### Q: What projects will the bonds fund?

A: The bonds, totaling \$80 million, will be allocated as follows:

#### 1. Parks and Recreation (\$20 million)

- Improvements to community centers, parks, sport courts, and playgrounds
- Investments in aquatics facilities
- Implementation of the [Recreate Asheville 10-Year Plan](#)

#### Projects Prioritized for Bond Funding:

- Malvern Hills Park Pool
- Recreation Park Pool
- Linwood Crump Shiloh Community Center
- Tempie Avery Montford Community Center
- Recreation & Azalea Park Improvements
- Upgrades to Walton Street Park
- Upgrades to Murray Hill Park
- Dedicated Pickleball Courts

#### 2. Affordable Housing (\$20 million)

- Investments in the Housing Trust Fund to create diverse and affordable housing options
- Support for homeownership through grants and down payment assistance
- Purchase land and existing homes for future affordable housing

#### Projects Prioritized for Bond Funding:

- Bolster funding for Housing Trust Fund
- Redevelopment of City Owned Land for Affordable Housing

- Additional bond eligible recommendations from the Affordable Housing Plan
  - Support Homeownership through home repair programs and/or down payment assistance
  - Contribute to an affordable housing acquisition fund

### 3. Transportation (\$20 million)

- Road resurfacing, sidewalk improvements, and pedestrian safety enhancements
- Implementation of transportation improvements from the GAP Plan

#### **Projects Prioritized for Bond Funding:**

- Street Resurfacing:
  - Emma Road
  - Montford Avenue
  - East Hawthorne Drive
  - Bevlyn Drive
  - Sen. Reynolds Road
  - Forest Lake Drive
  - Haywood Street
  - Thompson Street
  - Schenck Parkway
  - School Road
  - Sunset Drive
- Sidewalk, Pedestrian Improvements and Safety
  - Lexington Avenue
  - Haywood Street
  - Eagle/Market Street
  - London Road
- Greenways/Multi-use Paths
  - North Reed Creek Design and Construction
  - Smith Mill Creek Feasibility Study and Design

### 4. Public Safety Facilities (\$20 million)

- Maintenance and improvements to fire and police facilities
- Land acquisition for new and upgraded facilities
- Infrastructure investments identified in the Comprehensive Facility Study

#### **Projects Prioritized for Bond Funding:**

- Municipal Building Maintenance and Renovations
- New East Asheville Oakley Fire Station and Police Station  
LEED Certified
- West Asheville Haywood Road Police Substation  
Renovations

- Planning, Design and Land Acquisition for North Asheville Fire Station 7
- Planning and Design for South Asheville Fire Station 14
- Additional Improvements to existing Fire and Police Stations

**Q: How will this impact me financially?**

**A:** If all the bonds are approved, property taxes may increase to repay the debt. The estimated tax increase is 2.6 cents per \$100 in property valuation, which would result in an average annual increase of about \$110 for a home valued at \$420,946 after revaluation. The City will have seven years to issue the bonds and approximately 20 years to pay them off. Any changes to the property tax rate resulting from the bonds will be approved by the City Council in June 2025, after the vote.

**Q: Do I have to vote the same way for all four bonds?**

**A:** No, you do not have to vote the same way for all four bonds. Each bond measure is voted on separately, so you can choose to support some, all, or none of the bonds based on your priorities and how you feel about each specific area of funding. While you can vote differently on each bond, voting "yes" on all four bonds allows Asheville to comprehensively address the interconnected needs of our community—enhancing our public spaces, providing additional affordable housing, improving transportation, and maintaining public safety facilities. By supporting all four bonds, you are helping to create a balanced and forward-looking plan that benefits all residents and strengthens the city's infrastructure as a whole.

**Q: Will these bonds meet all of the Asheville's project needs?**

**A:** No, these bonds will not address the entirety of Asheville's project needs. While they represent a significant investment in our city's infrastructure and community services, the scope of the projects covered by this bond referendum is limited. The City plans to hold future bond referendums to continue making necessary improvements and to address other critical needs as Asheville grows and evolves. This ongoing commitment ensures that the City can responsibly manage its development and maintain a high quality of life for all residents.

**Q: How were the proposed projects identified?**

**A:** Each category has signature projects identified. Additional projects will be identified with equity, sustainability, current CIP projects and opportunities to maximize state and federal funding in mind. Proposed projects reflect community priorities gathered in community engagement efforts and the most recent National Community Survey™ of Asheville residents. Infrastructure projects are typically funded through the City's capital improvement program, also known as the CIP. The capital expenditures in the proposed bond program will supplement these projects which are currently funded in the 2024-2029 CIP.

**Q: How can the City of Asheville combat gentrification while utilizing the bond program for city-wide improvements?**

**A:** The City of Asheville is committed to promoting equitable and affordable housing through several strategies, including the passage of the Housing Bond to assist in implementing the following:

- **Anti-Displacement Efforts:** The bond will fund programs that help low-income residents stay in their homes, such as home repair programs and tax relief. It also supports the development of affordable housing in areas vulnerable to displacement.
- **Affordable Housing Plan:** The bond funds will be used to initiate eligible strategies in the City's [Affordable Housing Plan](#).
- **Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Updates:** The City is updating its UDO to remove barriers to housing development along key corridors and urban districts, which will complement the bond-funded projects. These updates are part of a broader anti-displacement strategy that focuses on maintaining affordability and increasing housing supply.

**Q: What happens if the bonds are not approved?**

**A:** If the bonds are not approved, the City may have to delay or scale back these critical projects. The absence of bond funding could slow the progress of the Affordable Housing Plan, limit improvements to public safety infrastructure, and reduce investments in parks and transportation, impacting the overall quality of life in Asheville.

**Q. What has the City accomplished with the 2016 bond money?**

**A:** In 2016, Asheville voters approved a bond referendum that provided \$74 million for capital improvement projects across the city, focusing on three key areas: \$17 million for parks, \$25 million for housing, and \$32 million for transportation. These funds were used to address the city's unfunded capital needs and to supplement existing projects within the City's annual budget and capital improvement program (CIP). As of now, all of the \$74 million from the 2016 bond has been spent, encumbered, or committed to specific projects. The progress of these projects is regularly communicated through the [City's Dashboard for CIP and Bond projects](#) and the [Capital and Bond Project Map](#). Additionally, the City Council receives quarterly updates on these projects during their regular meetings.

**Q: Bottom line, why should I vote for these bonds?**

**A:** Voting for these bonds is a vote for a stronger, more vibrant Asheville. These bonds represent a critical investment in our city's future—enhancing our parks and recreation facilities, expanding affordable housing options, improving transportation infrastructure, and upgrading public safety facilities. This is more than just a financial decision; it's about ensuring that Asheville continues to be a place where everyone can thrive, with access to quality public spaces, affordable homes, and safe neighborhoods. By approving these bonds, you are supporting a vision of Asheville that prioritizes equity, sustainability, and community well-being.