



Ballot Item General Steps

Feasibility

Feasibility study:
4–6 months
(shorter for smaller initiatives, longer for large capital projects).

Includes needs assessment, cost estimates, legal review, and potential funding options.

Involves internal staff, consultants, and sometimes early stakeholder focus groups.

Modeling

Goal: Determine the size and scope of tax (sales tax, property tax, bonds, etc.).

Length: 2–3 months, often overlapping with the end of the feasibility study.

Involves: Financial modeling by staff or consultants.

Reviewing mill levy rates, assessed value growth, or sales tax projections.

Running multiple scenarios.

Public Opinion

Goal: Gauge community support and refine the proposal.

Survey development & execution: 2 months (drafting questions, legal review, vendor selection, field survey, and analyzing results).

Education Outreach

Goal: Build understanding of the need, the proposal, and its impacts.

Length: 4–6 months minimum.

In Colorado, governments can educate but not advocate—so the focus is on facts, impacts, and why the measure is being considered.

Ballot Language

Goal: Meet legal deadlines for certification.

Drafting: 4–6 weeks (involving attorneys and finance staff)

TABOR language: must be finalized by **late August** for a November election.

Formal approval: Council must pass a resolution placing the measure on the ballot, by **late August**.

Campaign

Separate, external committee handles this.

Voter-led campaign committee handles advocacy.

Staff continue neutral information-sharing until Election Day.



Sample Ballot Item Timeline

**November –
Year Prior**
Feasibility
Study Begins

March
Feasibility
results; start
public survey

May
Survey results
shared; refine
proposal

May-July
Public
education &
outreach

August
Council
approves final
language

Sept-Nov.
Special
interest
committee
campaigning

If Measure Passes (Sales Tax)

Can begin project design with any already
budgeted funds.

New tax collection begins Jan. 1. Spending new
tax dollars can begin 4-6 months later.

If Measure Fails (Any Tax)

Best practice is to wait at least one year for
small (<5%) failure and 2-3 years for large
failure (10-15%). Consider phased approaches,
scaling-down, etc. of the project.