



# Across the State, North Carolinians Vote for Public Investments

## FACT SHEET

November 10, 2016

North Carolinians who cast their ballots this year made several critical choices. Among these were important ballot initiatives to increase public investment in transit, housing, schools, parks and redevelopment, in multiple counties. Research shows that quality infrastructure can help raise the living standard in diverse communities and boost productivity. By choosing to devote resources to these efforts, we as voters and community members take part in the creation of more equitable communities.

But the work does not end there. To build thriving communities, we must also invest in more than physical infrastructure. Our state budget and policy choices can ensure that our state and local communities are inclusive and equitable for all. There is much work to be done in the realms of healthcare, education, housing, immigration policy and others. We must continue to use our voices to promote the idea that every community can deliver opportunity.

Listed below are the referendums on public investments that passed by popular vote, in North Carolina.<sup>1</sup>

### Expansion and Improvement for Transit and Transportation Infrastructure

In Wake County, 53 percent of voters supported an increase in the sales tax by half of a percentage point (from 2 percent to 2.5 percent) in order to fund a transit plan to build a commuter rail and increase bus service in the county. This project will cost approximately \$2.3 billion, and now that the referendum has been approved, the county will be able to apply for state and federal grants to help fund the plan.

Asheville voters overwhelmingly voted to make transportation safety more equitable through \$32 million in bonds for road and sidewalk improvements, new bus shelters, accessible crossings and traffic calming.

Several counties away, Greensboro voters passed a ballot initiative for \$28 million in transportation bonds. As in other cities, funds will be used to improve, build and extend transportation infrastructure.

Similarly, in Charlotte, \$29 million in bonds was approved for new roads and a new bridge over I-85.<sup>2</sup>

### Support for Public Schools

In Durham, voters approved \$170 million in bonds to support the city's public schools, Durham Tech and a local public museum.

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<sup>1</sup> Compiled from various news articles and reporting by the NC Insider.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/politics-government/election/article113434068.html>

In Forsyth County, voters overwhelmingly approved a measure to provide \$350 million in bonds for public school improvements for Winston-Salem and Forsyth county schools.

In Orange County, voters approved spending of \$120 million to repair and renovate schools in both districts.<sup>3</sup>

### **Improvements in Housing Affordability**

Voters in Asheville (71%) approved \$25 million in housing affordability bonds to boost support for the Housing Trust Fund – a program that helps create affordable housing choices – and to allow City leaders to re-purpose city-owned land to build affordable housing.<sup>4</sup>

Greensboro residents (68%) voted for \$25 million in bonds to build and improve homes for low-income families. Funding will also support housing or neighborhood revitalization programs, and provide loans and grants to individuals, developers and other organizations.

Charlotte voters approved \$15 million in bonds to build affordable housing in the city.

Orange County voters (65%) passed a \$5million bond for 1000 low and moderate income homes.<sup>5</sup>

### **Investments in Public Parks**

Wilmington voters approved \$30.4 million in bonds for public parks that will support the construction of 15 park projects.

In Asheville, voters also supported public investment in parks through \$17 million in bonds to improve five major parks.

In Greensboro, \$34.5 million in bonds was approved for buying, building and improving City parks and public recreation facilities.

In Forsyth County, voters approved \$15 million in bonds to go towards the county's park and recreational facilities.

### **Community & Economic Development**

Greensboro voters supported \$38.5 million in bonds that will allow city leaders to “buy, build, improve or otherwise equip urban renewal and community development projects.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/election/article113437073.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ashevilenc.gov/Departments/CommunityRelations/Asheville2016BondReferendumInformation.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/election/article113437073.html>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/index.aspx?page=4958>