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Public can weigh in on bond proposal

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The Charlotte City Council will hold a public hearing Monday on the biggest city bond package proposed in at least a dozen years. Residents will have the chance to speak to the council about \$227.2 million the city hopes to borrow for a range of transportation, neighborhood improvement and housing projects around the city. The 7 p.m. hearing at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center is one step in a process designed to make taxpayers aware of how their money is spent.

Ultimately, the question will be put to voters on the Nov. 4 ballot.

Under the city's plan, three-quarters of the money – \$170.2 million – would go toward road projects ranging from traffic light repairs to road extensions.

Sixteen million dollars could go toward sidewalks, road improvements and other infrastructure work at the Eastland Mall property at Central Avenue and Albemarle Road, where city officials want to help a developer tear down the shopping center and build a mix of homes and businesses. The city would put \$6 million toward sidewalks, lighting, sewer connections and other improvements at the Double Oaks project off Statesville Road. The city is working to replace a community of dilapidated, low-income apartments there with a mix of condominiums and affordable housing.

Another \$10 million would go toward an affordable housing program that helps developers offset the cost of building low-income homes.

Voter approval of the bonds would not raise the city tax rate, said City Treasurer Scott Greer. He said city staff has calculated the amount of money the city can borrow within the existing tax rate, and the bond package does not go over that limit.

“There is no intention to raise taxes and there is no reason to believe that we would have to raise taxes,” Greer said.



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