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Voters OK bonds for county, city projects

\$477 million for improving parks, roads, neighborhoods, housing in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

By Julia Oliver

joliver@charlotteobserver.com

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Voters passed \$477 million in bonds Tuesday that will allow city and county governments to pay for a range of civic projects, with 96 percent of precincts reporting.

Voters across Mecklenburg County approved \$250 million in parks and recreation bonds. City of Charlotte voters weighed in on the three other bond choices, which total \$227 million. With 161 percent of 167 city precincts reporting, 74 percent of voters supported roads bonds, 70 percent supported neighborhood improvements and 62 percent supported affordable housing.

Voters considered their communities, children and taxes when deciding whether to approve or reject the bonds. Scotty Sells, a teacher at Merry Oaks Elementary School, said he voted for the parks and roads bonds and against the housing and neighborhood bonds. He said he doesn't think his community in east Charlotte needs more affordable housing, but he believes Charlotte needs better roads.

"Anything we can do to speed up travel from point A to point B would be a good thing," he said.

Gary Kelly, a Plaza Midwood resident, said he voted against all the bonds.

"I'm happy with the roads. The parks are in fine shape for me," he said. "I don't want a tax increase."

Nyakio Timmons said she voted for all the bonds, but thought the affordable housing bond was most important. She said it would help "people who don't have money and don't have a place to go."

The parks bond money will pay for about 60 renovations and new park projects across Mecklenburg, including renovations to the Aquatic Center in uptown and completion of a new sports complex in Matthews. A portion of the money also will help buy land for future projects.

The city road bond covers improvements to at least nine specific roads, as well as help with general programs such as traffic-light maintenance and improving bicycle access on existing roads. The specific road projects include improving Rea Road between Colony Road and N.C. 51 in the southern part of the city and Statesville Road between Starita Road and Keith Drive in north Charlotte.

About \$16 million of the neighborhood bonds is planned to go toward street and sidewalk work at the Eastland Mall site in east Charlotte, if that site is redeveloped. Another \$6 million is for similar work at the Double Oaks project off Statesville Avenue, where an apartment complex will be developed into a mix of residential units, shops and office space.

The specific uses of the affordable housing money will be determined through the city's Housing Trust Fund, a body that helps developers offset the cost of building homes for people of low and moderate incomes.



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tonybelk8669 wrote on 11/05/2008 10:35:04 AM:

Are you serious? Eastland mall and Double Oaks? Lets spend more money here so it can be destroyed again!!! Thats the way to waste money. At least spend it where people try to take care of things!

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TheBrain wrote on 11/05/2008 09:39:52 AM:

I'm a republican and voted in favor of all 4 bond measures. I also always vote in favor of school bonds. In order to continue to make Charlotte an attractive place to live and work we need to make these type of investments. This isn't just a give away as the area benefits greatly since we are then more attractive to industries looking to relocate, people moving to the area (keeping home prices higher), etc. Bottom line these type of things are wise investments in our future.

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weddfem wrote on 11/05/2008 09:02:25 AM: