

Investment in Our Future

VOTE NOV. 3

At A Glance

Supports eligible Capital Improvement Projects including schools, public safety, parks and roads

- **Existing 1% Local Option Sales Tax**
first approved by Charlotte County voters in 1994
- **Not a New Tax**
- **30 Years of Progress**
- **Visitors Help Pay**
through taxable purchases
- **Every Dollar Stays Local**



Olean Boulevard widening was funded through the 2014 voter-approved 1% local option sales tax.

Existing 1% Local Option Sales Tax

Frequently Asked Questions



What is the 1% Sales Tax?

Under Florida Statute 212, counties, with voter approval, can increase the statewide 6% sales tax to 7% for infrastructure needs. The sales tax is applied to transactions subject to state tax. Food, medicine and certain services are not subject to sales tax. In addition, the 1% tax is levied only on the first \$5,000 of any purchase.

These monies can be used for a wide range of capital infrastructure expenses such as public safety vehicles, acquiring park or environmental land, or engineering, design and construction of any public facility with a life span of more than five years. Maintenance and operating costs are not eligible expenses, nor are reimbursements for prior land purchases.

Is this a new tax?

No, this is NOT a new tax. There will be no increase in the amount of sales tax you currently pay. This is a continuation of the existing Charlotte County 1% local option sales tax first approved in 1994. The referendum is asking that you extend the tax for an additional 20 years to fund needed infrastructure improvements.

Why a 20-year term?

A 20-year term for the 1% local option sales tax extension would enable the county to use bond financing to pay for projects rather than using the "pay as we go" policy previously used. Bond financing would enable the county to deliver more projects faster, lower construction cost inflation exposure, enable the county to seek matching grant funds and improve its long-term planning.

What are the advantages of using a sales tax?

The county would issue bonds through underwriters, such as a bank or investment firm. The county would pay back the money on a regular basis using sales tax revenue. The county would pay interest to the underwriter in addition to the premium.

What are the advantages of using a sales tax?

It is a fair funding source paid by everyone, not just local property owners. Tourists and seasonal visitors contribute their fair share toward roads and sidewalks that improve the quality of life for everyone.

Why use sales tax for these projects over other revenue sources?

There are several advantages to the sales tax over property taxes:

- Visitors to the county pay the local option sales tax, rather than ad valorem taxes which are paid 100% by property owners;
- There will be no increase to the sales tax we are currently paying; and
- People on fixed spending incomes pay a smaller overall percentage of sales tax as opposed to those who spend more on major taxable purchases

Does the money stay in Charlotte County?

All revenue generated by the 1% local option sales tax is spent on projects within Charlotte County.

Where can I get more information about the projects and the local option sales tax?

Visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/salestax for project information.

To request a speaker about the 1% Local Option Sales Tax, visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/SpeakerRequest.

The local option sales tax is authorized by Florida Statute 212. The statute can be found online by visiting <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes>. The local option sales tax is located in Title XV Taxation and Finance.

When would the extension of the existing local option sales tax go into effect?

The current sales tax expires on Dec. 31, 2026. The extension would begin on Jan. 1, 2027 and continue for 20 years to Dec. 31, 2046.

How much money would be collected?

We estimate the sales tax would generate about \$980 million, with the City of Punta Gorda receiving approximately \$82 million.

What did Charlotte County do with the sales tax funds already collected?

In 1994 voters approved the 1% local option sales tax for two specific projects, the construction of a new Justice Center and a new jail. In 1998, 2002, 2008, 2014 and 2020, voters approved extensions. Visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/salestax for past project list.

What does the City of Punta Gorda receive from the 1% Sales Tax?

Under Florida Statutes, the City of Punta Gorda receives approximately 9.1% of the sales tax revenue. Visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/salestax for past project list.

Are these wish list projects? How would approval affect my existing taxes?

These are not wish list projects. The majority of them have been included in the county's 5-year capital improvement plan (CIP). For example, the county has been discussing the road program deficit for years. Recent property tax reforms have made it doubtful that the county will be able to adequately address the construction of capital projects without an alternate funding source. Sales tax is an opportunity that will spread the burden among tourists and seasonal residents, not just local property owners.

Can the projects change?

Yes, the project list would change if approved by a majority of the County Commission.

What projects would be funded if the local option sales tax were to be extended?

The list of projects was approved by the County Commission based on a review of capital needs and review by a citizen focus group. The project list can be found at www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/salestax.

How do I know as a voter that these projects would be completed?

All projects funded by the 1994, 1998, 2002 and 2008 sales tax referendums have been completed. All but one project funded by the 2014 sales tax referendum have been completed. Florida statutes require the county to adopt a plan for sales tax expenditures and all revenue is kept separate from other county funds. The funds can only be used for the projects authorized by the referendum.

What input did the community have on the local option sales tax?

A citizen focus group reviews the proposed projects and makes recommendations to the County Commission. All meetings are advertised and open to the public. County Commission meetings included opportunities for public input, including the meetings where the local option sales tax was discussed or project status reports were provided. Voters will have the final say on whether the local option sales tax extension is approved in the Nov. 3, 2026 general election.

What happens if the sales tax question is not approved by the voters?

The projects will have to wait for available funding, which will be many years in the future. Eventually the funding for these projects will fall on the capital improvement ad valorem tax, and property owners will be paying for their construction, with no assistance from visitors to our county.

What will the referendum ballot language say?

TITLE

EXTENSION OF THE ONE PERCENT (1%) LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX FROM JANUARY 1, 2027, TO DECEMBER 31, 2046.

QUESTION

SHOULD THE ONE PERCENT LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX BE EXTENDED FOR TWENTY YEARS FROM JANUARY 1, 2027, TO DECEMBER 31, 2046, WITH THE PROCEEDS TO BE USED FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AS DEFINED BY LAW, INCLUDING PUBLIC SAFETY, PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES, QUALITY OF LIFE, AND SCHOOLS?

FOR the one-cent sales tax

AGAINST the one-cent sales tax

