

Bernalillo County Bond Issues

Voter can choose “For” or “Against”

What does “general obligation (GO) bond” mean for taxpayers?

These questions authorize Bernalillo County to issue general obligation bonds payable from general (ad valorem) property taxes levied on all taxable property in the county without limitation as to rate or amount. The county pledges its full faith and credit to back the bonds.

NOTE: PROPERTY-TAX EFFECT: The Legislative Financial Committee (LFC) estimated that the 2026 GO bond package was within the state's available bonding capacity and could be issued while maintaining a flat statewide debt-service mill levy as older GO debt is retired. If that's true, your taxes should not increase as a result of passage of these bonds. **If voters reject these new bonds, the state would not incur that new debt, and property taxes could decrease.**

Financing a major building renovation or new construction with long-term debt is different from financing vehicles or equipment that may require replacement in less than the life of the bonds.

Library materials and resources

Authorization: \$2,500,000.

Recommendation: **Vote AGAINST.**

This bond finances the purchase of materials and resources (books, e-books, technology, and similar items) for libraries in the county system. These items generally have useful lives measured in years, not decades. Borrowing long-term to acquire short-lived assets adds interest costs and keeps the debt-service levy higher than it would otherwise be once older bonds are retired.

Public safety facilities, fleet, and other county buildings

Authorization: \$8,900,000

Recommendation: **Vote AGAINST.**

This bond funds construction, remodeling, furnishing, equipping, and repair of health and public safety facilities, fire stations, law-enforcement facilities, jail and detention facilities, courthouse facilities, youth and family service centers, visitor centers, and related improvements (including ADA work). **It also covers replacement of fleet vehicles and heavy equipment.** While some building work is a capital improvement, the explicit inclusion of fleet vehicles and heavy equipment means a material portion finances assets that will likely need replacement while the bonds remain outstanding. Voters cannot separate the short-lived fleet portion from the facility portion and this is a poor use of tax dollars.

Parks and recreation

Authorization: \$20,384,920

Recommendation: Neutral*

This is the largest county bond and covers **acquiring property** and planning, designing, constructing, remodeling, furnishing, equipping, repairing, and improving parks, aquatic centers, community centers, playgrounds, ball fields, open spaces, cultural and educational facilities, and related work (including some ADA improvements). Examples cited include portions of the Mesa del Sol Regional Outdoor Sports Complex, East Mountain and Edward C. Sandoval North Valley baseball complexes, Rio Bravo Park, Tom Tenorio Park, West Gun Club Park, and other community facilities. These are primarily capital projects with longer useful lives.

NOTE: Approving the bond locks in new debt service. Rejecting it would allow more of the existing debt-service levy to roll off as older bonds are paid, potentially creating lower property taxes.

*If the bond language did not include “acquiring property,” the recommendation would be ‘Vote FOR.’ However, with that language, bond proceeds can be used for expansion of properties rather than focusing on existing projects that need attention.

Transportation

Authorization: \$6,215,080

Recommendation: Vote FOR.

This bond funds roads, non-motorized pathways, bridges, traffic calming, guardrails, bike lanes, trails, sidewalks, transit improvements, paving, landscaping, traffic signals, and other street improvements (including ADA-related work). Examples include work on Atrisco Vista Boulevard North, Condershire Drive, Isleta Boulevard, and East Mountain roads. Road and street work is long-lived capital.

NOTE: Approving the bond locks in new debt service. Rejecting it would allow more of the existing debt-service levy to roll off as older bonds are paid, potentially creating lower property taxes.

Storm drainage and utilities

Authorization: \$1,000,000

Recommendation: Vote FOR

Funds acquisition of property and planning, design, construction, rehabilitation, and improvement of storm sewer and drainage, wastewater, water, and drainage systems and facilities. This is long-lived infrastructure.

NOTE: Approving the bond locks in new debt service. Rejecting it would allow more of the existing debt-service levy to roll off as older bonds are paid, potentially creating lower property taxes.

Public housing

Authorization: \$6,000,000

Recommendation: Vote AGAINST.

This bond funds acquiring property and planning, designing, upgrading, constructing, remodeling, rehabilitating, furnishing, equipping, repairing, and otherwise improving housing facilities in the county. County statements indicate some funds would support refurbishment of senior housing and other affordable-housing work; specific projects were still being identified when the questions were placed on the ballot.

NOTE: Housing facility work is generally a capital improvement, which is how bonds should be used. Unfortunately, because County officials failed to tell voters exactly what this bond would be used for, we recommend voting AGAINST this bond. Voters have an explicit right to know how their tax dollars will be used.