

Greenville 1% sales tax gets one step closer, with strong support from County Council

Greenville County Council approved another reading of a measure that would ask voters about a penny sales tax in November.

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GREENVILLE COUNTY, S.C. — A Greenville County penny tax just got one step closer to becoming a reality.

A packed room crowded together inside the Greenville County Council chambers on Tuesday for the second reading of Greenville's penny sales tax. The tax would charge an extra penny for every dollar

spent on purchases, not including groceries, pharmaceuticals, and gasoline.

Tuesday's second reading would bring that tax one step closer to adding it on the November ballot. Over a dozen members of the public spoke out during the meeting, some against the tax, like Jill Hood.

"Why aren't developers not investing more money on the roads? Because they're the ones building all these new homes and it's bringing in more traffic and stuff like this," Hood said

Others, like Fountain Inn Mayor G.P. Mcleer, voiced their support for the tax.

"I'm asking you to let our residents decide this question. Should our highest priority road projects wait another 20 or 30 years of state gas tax money to catch up with our needs? Or do we take it upon ourselves, and those that visit here to get it done much sooner," Mcleer said in Tuesday's meeting.

At the time, members of the council jarred back and forth over the importance of transparency of the funding, and giving the citizens a voice. In an 8-4 vote, the council ultimately chose to approve the second reading. Chairman

Dan Tripp voted in favor of putting it on the ballot.

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"There's hundreds and hundreds of roads across Greenville county that will be improved because of this. If you want the roads improved, if you want the roads to be safer, we need help. We do not have the money in our budget to pave \$1 billion worth of roads," Tripp says.

One of the most vocal members who was against approval was District 19 Councilman Benton Blount.

"I would've made an amendment that we would've made it easier for people to read off the rest of the list, to know how many miles were being paved, to how much each project costs, because originally, they said that project will have a cost on the ballot. On the sample ballot, there is no individual cost, it's just the total," he explained.

Chairman Tripp wants voters to know there will be transparency with the tax if it's instilled.

"We had full public hearings with the commission, everything was publicized, everything was advertised; the process, the list of roads has been on the website, we put the website months ago," he says.

The council will host a third and final reading for the penny tax's position on the ballot, I'm told that will be in August, if it passes the choice will go to you, the voters.