

# Special Election Information

Town of Castle Rock, Colorado

The Town will have six questions on the Nov. 3, 2015 ballot.

**THIS IS NOT YOUR BALLOT**

**DRAFT**

**Summary of ballot questions for  
Castle Rock Special Election**



[CRgov.com/2015election](http://CRgov.com/2015election)

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## Dear Castle Rock voters and residents,

Castle Rock is a home-rule municipality. That means, in accordance with State Statute, we are able to make local laws through local ordinances and the Town Charter.

The Charter outlines everything from the Town's name, to Town Council elections, to the process for making local laws by ordinance. Six questions will be on the Nov. 3 ballot, asking Castle Rock voters about changes to the Town Charter.

The Town of Castle Rock is sending this election "blue book" to all Town residents – regardless of whether they are currently registered to vote – to provide information on the election and the questions that will be included on the ballot. There are several significant points to be made on both sides of each question, and the Town has chosen two or three to illustrate here.

These questions will be included with State and School District questions on the Nov. 3 ballot. The election is being coordinated by Douglas County Elections.

Active registered voters can expect to receive their ballots from Douglas County in mid-October. You can register up to – and including the day of – the special election. To check if you are registered to vote, visit [GoVoteColorado.com](http://GoVoteColorado.com).

**Voters: This is not your ballot. Please do not return this sample ballot to the Town.**

Once you receive and complete your official ballot, please make sure to sign the affidavit on the back of the return envelope. You can either mail it to or drop it off at Town Hall, 100 N. Wilcox St., or drop it off at the Douglas County Elections Office, 125 Stephanie Place.

Both locations have 24-hour drop boxes where you can return your ballot. If you need to register to vote, update voter information, vote in person, or obtain a replacement ballot, visit the Douglas County Elections office at 125 Stephanie Place between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on weekdays, or from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 31. The same location will be open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Election Day.

All ballots must be received by 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 3. Completed ballots sent by mail will require postage. Please allow adequate time to mail your ballot, or drop it off in person.

Results will be posted by Douglas County and at [CRgov.com/2015election](http://CRgov.com/2015election).

Sincerely,

Sally Misare, Town Clerk  
303-660-1367  
[smisare@CRgov.com](mailto:smisare@CRgov.com)

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## **Town of Castle Rock Ballot Question 2B**

Currently, Castle Rock voters elect new Councilmembers during regular municipal elections in April of even-numbered years. A YES vote on this measure means regular municipal elections would be coordinated by Douglas County in November of even-numbered years. A NO vote on this measure means regular municipal elections would continue to be in April of even-numbered years.

Council terms scheduled to end in April 2016 and April 2018 would be adjusted through November of those years. Therefore, a transition plan for the current sitting Councilmembers would be necessary.

### **Arguments for a YES vote on 2B**

- November elections are conducted by Douglas County. Because elections are a key County function, Douglas County has the designated technology and staffing to run and manage elections. Plus, it is a cost-savings to the Town.
- As part of the process, voters must sign the back of their ballot envelopes to validate their ballots. Unlike Castle Rock, Douglas County has the database to verify those signatures and confirm a voter's identity.
- Voter turnout is typically higher in November elections, so participation in Castle Rock elections would likely increase if coordinated with November elections, rather than in April.

### **Arguments for a NO vote on 2B**

- When coordinated with national or State issues, local issues tend to get lost and, therefore, these issues do not get the awareness and attention they deserve.
- To make this change, the current Council terms would be extended by seven months.
- April elections are an established and a traditional part of Castle Rock history.

## **QUESTION AS IT WILL APPEAR ON THE BALLOT:**

### **Town of Castle Rock Ballot Question 2B**

#### **Castle Rock Charter Amendment**

Shall the Town of Castle Rock Home Rule Charter be amended to: (i) change the date of regular municipal elections to the general election date in November of even-numbered years beginning in 2016; (ii) conduct such elections as coordinated elections with Douglas County under the Uniform Election Code of 1992; and (iii) adopt a transition plan on Town Council terms to implement such change in election date, by revising Sections 2-3, 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, and Article XVII of the Town of Castle Rock Home Rule Charter, as provided in Ordinance No. 2015-30?

YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

## **Town of Castle Rock Ballot Question 2C**

Currently, the Town officially publishes public notices for ordinances (local laws) Council will consider in the legal section of the local newspaper.

A YES vote on this measure would change the way the Town publishes those legal notices. Instead of being published in the local newspaper's legal public notices section, the notices would be posted on the Town's website, CRgov.com. A NO vote on this measure would maintain the status quo, in which legal notices for Town ordinances are published in the local newspaper.

Note: public notices for land use hearings are already published online. Public notices for ordinances have been available at Town Hall in the Town Clerk's Office, and that practice would continue.

### **Arguments for a YES vote on 2C**

- Publishing these notices online is free, so it would be a cost-savings to the Town.
- Posting to the Internet is quick and more efficient for both the Town's internal process and those looking for posted notices.
- The newspaper is not read by every Castle Rock resident.

### **Arguments for a NO vote on 2C**

- Not everyone has access to computers and online services and would, therefore, have trouble accessing public notices.
- The newspaper is a traditionally known format for publishing legal notices.
- Technology can fail or be compromised.

## **QUESTION AS IT WILL APPEAR ON THE BALLOT:**

### **Town of Castle Rock Ballot Question 2C**

#### **Castle Rock Charter Amendment**

Shall Section 7-3 of the Town of Castle Rock Home Rule Charter be amended to require the posting of public notices of ordinances on the Town of Castle Rock website rather than publication in a newspaper, as provided in Ordinance No. 2015-31?

YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

## **Town of Castle Rock Ballot Question 2D**

Town Council makes local laws by ordinance. In most cases, once an ordinance passes two readings in front of Town Council, there is a 30-day waiting period. Then, the ordinance becomes part of local law. During that waiting period, there is time for residents to protest the ordinance by referendum.

Currently, Town Charter requires signatures from 5 percent of registered voters in Castle Rock to validate a referendum petition, so it can move forward. A YES vote on this question would change that threshold to 10 percent. A NO vote maintains the status quo, which requires signatures from 5 percent of registered voters.

### **Arguments for a YES vote on 2D**

- With a higher threshold of required registered voter signatures, which is compliant with Colorado law, the referendum would be a more accurate representation of the wishes of Castle Rock voters.
- This measure would minimize the likelihood of using taxpayer money on an effort not fully backed by the community.
- The process for Town Council to pass an ordinance already includes opportunities for public comment and input.

### **Arguments for a NO vote on 2D**

- This higher threshold of required registered voter signatures would make it a more difficult process for the community to reverse an ordinance.
- Historically, a petition has required thousands of signatures, which can be difficult to get.
- This provision has been in the Town Charter since the Charter was adopted in 1987.

## **QUESTION AS IT WILL APPEAR ON THE BALLOT:**

### **Town of Castle Rock Ballot Question 2D**

#### **Castle Rock Charter Amendment**

Shall Section 15-2(b) of the Town of Castle Rock Home Rule Charter be amended to increase the percentage of registered voter signatures required on a referendum petition from five percent to ten percent, as provided in Ordinance No. 2015-32?

YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

## **Town of Castle Rock Ballot Measure 2E Castle Rock Charter Amendment**

Another way voters can create local laws is through the initiative process. Initiatives are ordinances started by voters, rather than by Town Council.

Currently, Town Charter requires valid signatures from 10 percent of registered voters to get an initiative to ballot. A YES vote on this question would change that threshold of voter signatures to 15 percent. A NO vote on this question means the required percentage of signatures remains at 10 percent of registered voters.

### **Arguments for a YES vote on 2E**

- With a higher threshold of required registered voter signatures, which is compliant with Colorado law, the initiative would be more representative of Castle Rock voters.
- This measure would minimize the likelihood of using taxpayer money on an effort not fully backed by the community.
- There are several other ways to influence local government, including electing your Town Council member; attending public meetings, open houses, and board and commission meetings; using online platforms; and contacting Councilmembers.

### **Arguments for a NO vote on 2E**

- This higher threshold would make it a more difficult process for the community to influence local government through the initiative process.
- Historically, a petition has required thousands of signatures, which can be difficult to get.
- This provision has been in the Town Charter since the Charter's adoption in 1987.

## **QUESTION AS IT WILL APPEAR ON THE BALLOT:**

### **Town of Castle Rock Ballot Measure 2E Castle Rock Charter Amendment**

Shall Section 15-1(b) of the Town of Castle Rock Home Rule Charter be amended to increase the percentage of registered voter signatures required on an initiative petition from ten percent to fifteen percent, as provided in Ordinance No. 2015-33?

YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_



## **Town of Castle Rock Ballot Question 2F**

Residents who disagree with an ordinance Town Council passes can challenge it through a referendum. Or, they can start their own initiative. Both approaches go through a similar process to get on a ballot.

First, the form of the petition must be verified. Then, signatures can be gathered. If there are enough valid signatures, Town Council must act. For a referendum, Council can either decide to hold an election or rescind the ordinance in question. For initiatives, Council can either implement the initiative or schedule an election.

Just as a group can start a referendum or initiative, it can also withdraw one. Currently, voters who initiate a referendum or initiative have until 20 days before an election to withdraw the petition. A YES vote on this question would change that timeframe to noon the day Council is set to act on the referendum or initiative petition. A NO vote would maintain the status quo of 20 days before an election.

### **Arguments for a YES vote on 2F**

- Under current law, petition representatives can wait until after ballots are printed, and possibly even mailed to voters, before deciding to withdraw their petition, wasting taxpayer money.
- This measure prevents voter confusion. Under current law, it is possible for the Town to be required to send out a ballot and then not actually tally the votes, due to the petition being withdrawn late in the process, creating confusion.

### **Arguments for a NO vote on 2F**

- This measure would reduce the time a petition representative has to withdraw the petition.
- Petitioners invested time and energy into their petition. They should be allowed to withdraw it up to 20 days before the election.

## **QUESTION AS IT WILL APPEAR ON THE BALLOT:**

### **Town of Castle Rock Ballot Measure 2F**

#### **Castle Rock Charter Amendment**

Shall Section 15-6 of the Town of Castle Rock Home Rule Charter be amended to change the timeframe in which an initiative or referendum petition can be withdrawn to not later than 12:00 PM on the date the Town Council is to consider the subject petition, as provided in Ordinance No. 2015-34?

YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

## **Town of Castle Rock Ballot Measure 2G Castle Rock Charter Amendment**

During a referendum or initiative process, petitioners gather signatures from registered voters. Those signatures are then verified by the Town and used to determine whether there is enough voter support for an election on the referendum or initiative.

However, there is not currently a process for having a signature removed from a petition.

A YES vote on this measure would create a new provision in the Town Charter that allows voters to remove their signatures from a petition before it is submitted to the Town for verification. In implementing that new provision, a process would be created. A NO vote maintains the status quo in which there is no process for a signer to remove his or her signature before the petition is submitted to the Town for verification.

### **Arguments for a YES vote on 2G**

- This measure establishes a process for a person to have his or her signature removed from a petition.
- It's difficult to fully understand an issue in front of a grocery store or library, where signatures are often collected. If a voter does additional research and changes his or her mind, he or she would have a process for removing his or her name from something with which he or she no longer agrees.
- This privilege is afforded voters signing statewide petitions; it should be a privilege at the local level, too.

### **Arguments for a NO vote on 2G**

- There is no need for this process. Signers should research the issue before they sign a petition.
- Allowing voters to remove signatures makes it more difficult for petition representatives to track their progress as they work to reach their desired outcome of a successful petition.
- This measure would require more Town resources in creating and operating the withdrawal process.

## **QUESTION AS IT WILL APPEAR ON THE BALLOT:**

### **Town of Castle Rock Ballot Measure 2G Castle Rock Charter Amendment**

Shall Sections 15-1 and 15-2 of the Town of Castle Rock Home Rule Charter be amended to authorize the withdrawal of a signature by a registered elector on an initiative or referendum petition on or before the date of filing of such petition, as provided in Ordinance No. 2015-35?

YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

Town of Castle Rock  
100 N. Wilcox St.  
Castle Rock, CO 80104

# **Election Information**

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