

GCRA Board Meeting

November 19, 2026

December 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Board Holiday Luncheon, 12:00 Noon, Roost @ Hyatt	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23 (Office Closed for Christmas holidays)	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

January 2027

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 New Year's Day (Office Closed)	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 Administration Committee meeting, 12:30	13	14 Operations Committee meeting, 12:30	15	16
17	18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26 Board meeting, 12:30	27	28	29	30
31						

GCRA
Greenville County Redevelopment Authority

GCRA Board Annual Meeting Agenda
Thursday, November 19, 2026 – 12:30 p.m.
GCRA Board Room

1) Call to Order — Chair Jane Kizer

2) Invocation

3) *Approval of October 27, 2026 Board Minutes (Pages 5 – 7)

4) *Approval of Human Relations Commission Funding Request (Page 8)

5) Election of Officers

6) Board Business for the Next Year
   a) Review Administration & Operations Committee Responsibilities
   b) 2027 Meeting Schedule Draft – Committee Assignments TBD (Page 9)

7) Administration Committee (Pages 10 – 12)
   a) Financial Highlights – KPI (Page 13)

8) Operations Committee (Pages 14 – 17)
   a) *Approval of Sales Price Profiles

9) Other Business
   a) Executive Director Updates

10) Executive Session. When necessary, the Board convenes in Executive Session for the discussion of negotiations incidental to proposed contractual arrangements and proposed sale or purchase of property, the receipt of legal advice where the legal advice relates to a pending, threatened, or potential claim or other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege, settlement of legal claims, or the position of the public agency in other adversary situations involving the assertion against the Redevelopment Authority of a claim, or other matters authorized by the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

11) Adjournment

Minutes
Greenville County Redevelopment Authority
Regular Session
Tuesday, October 27, 2026

Board Members Present:
Jane Kizer, Chair
Denise Ernul, Vice Chair
Diana Weir, Treasurer
Barry Coleman
Dean Doolittle
David Doser
James Hammond
Robert Julian
Matthew Nocella
Joanna Reese
Paul Schweikardt
DeAndra "DJ" Wilson

Staff Members Present:
Joe Smith, Executive Director
Beverly Robertson, Human Resources Manager
Pamela Proner, Finance Director
Francisco Arnaiz, Program Director
Meg Macauley, Senior Executive Assistant & Office Manager

1. **Opening and Roll Call.** The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 12:30 p.m.

2. **Invocation.** The invocation was offered by Mr. Doser.

3. **Approval of the September 22, 2026 Board Minutes.** On a motion by Ms. Reese, seconded by Ms. Weir, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the September 22, 2026 Board meeting as presented.

4. **Approval to Sell 312 Lion Heart Lane, Greer.** Mr. Smith referenced an on-screen "handout" and explained that a buyer for this townhome is using a bank with whom GCRA has not worked before, and their underwriters have requested a number of documents to authenticate our authority to sell the property. Ultimately, after consultation with our attorney, he drafted a resolution for the board to approve that is specific to this property. With board approval, officers will sign and the executed document will be provided to the bank; if they are still unwilling to proceed, staff may instead pursue Mortgage Loan Fund (MLF) financing for the buyer.

On a motion by Ms. Reese, seconded by Mr. Doser, the Board unanimously authorized Mr. Smith as signing authority for 312 Lion Heart Lane, Greer as needed for bank underwriting as outlined in the document provided.

5. Administration Committee.

a. Approval of 2027 Holiday Schedule. At their September meeting, the Administration Committee approved the 2027 holiday schedule; they are the same as they have been for many years with no additions or changes.

On a motion by Mr. Nocella, the Board unanimously approved the 2027 holiday schedule as presented.

b. Financial Highlights/KPI. Ms. Proner presented the Financial Highlights for the month of August, noting a cash balance of nearly $16.6 million, and assets almost the same as the previous month. The most significant change was a Notes Payable decrease of nine percent due to the payoff of the Fairview loan at the end of August. Revenue was slightly low for the month because HUD had not yet funded us; staff held reimbursement requests until HUD funds were released several weeks ago. The rental portfolio showed a net loss of $14,824 due in part to about $40,000 in property repair and maintenance at Miller Place Court and for several Project 43 properties. The LGIP balance is still healthy, with $54,778 in interest generated for the month for a year-to-date interest total of $109,735; the average interest rate of 3.90 percent has remained stable for several months.

6. Operations Committee. Mr. Doser stated that there were no approval items.

7. Other Business – Executive Director Updates.

a. Meeting with New Council Member. Mr. Smith thanked Ms. Reese who had coordinated a meeting among them and Mr. Daniel Rumfelt, councilman-elect for Greenville County District 26 who will be replacing Rick Bradley. Mr. Smith appreciated the opportunity to begin the conversation about GCRA's work so quickly with Mr. Rumfelt.

b. Partner Projects. Mr. Smith stated that he spoke today to Mr. Jay Bernstein of Fitch Irick, the developer for Project Worley; permits will soon be requested for construction. Mr. Bernstein has been in discussion with City of Greenville representatives about another potential project located in the city limits; he would like for GCRA to be involved, so conversation will be ongoing.

c. Community Meetings. Mr. Smith shared that Program staff participated this past Saturday in a "Vision 25" meeting to continue GCRA's outreach into the communities we serve. Ms. Ernul noted that attendees asked excellent questions and Mr. Arnaiz provided thorough responses about GCRA's activities and projects to ensure that residents understand what we do. Mr. Smith added that Mr. Arnaiz and Ms. Hallman attended a recent community meeting with County Council Chair Blount. GCRA's information was well-received there as well; staff are working diligently to keep lines of communication with the community open.

d. Board Liaison Updates. Ms. Macauley shared that at the most recent County Council meeting, all four of GCRA's incumbent board members, Mr. Coleman, Mr. Doser, Mr. Julian, and Ms. Weir, were re-appointed to additional three-year terms. She reminded the board that the November meeting will be their annual meeting at which time officers will be elected, noting the Thursday date the week before Thanksgiving. She also reminded the board of their holiday luncheon on December 1st at Roost.

8. Executive Session. On a motion by Mr. Doser, seconded by Ms. Weir, the Board voted unanimously to enter Executive Session at 12:50 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter.

On a motion by Ms. Weir, seconded by Mr. Doser, the Board voted unanimously to exit the Executive Session. Executive Session adjourned at 1:07; no action was taken that required a vote of the board.

9. Adjournment. There being no further business, on a motion by Ms. Reese, seconded by Ms. Weir, the meeting was adjourned at 1:08 p.m.

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Secretary

GCRA
Greenville County Redevelopment Authority

Memorandum

To: **GCRA Board**

From: **Joe Smith**
Executive Director

Date: **November 19, 2026**

Subject: **Human Relations Commission Funding Request**

Background:
Greenville County Human Relations Commission (GCHRC) works to promote equal opportunity for all citizens in the areas of housing and financial empowerment. The commission was established as a quasi-governmental unit of Greenville County government in 1972 by the South Carolina General Assembly. GCHRC was recognized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as the Fair Housing Agency for Greenville County in 1986, and in 2004, GCHRC became a HUD-Approved Housing Counseling Agency (LHCA).

GCHRC's housing counseling services address multiple barriers that allow low- and moderate-income Greenville County households to access and maintain stable and affordable housing. By providing a range of one-on-one housing counseling services, GCHRC can meet clients where they are and provide a continuum of support for clients who first need to stabilize their housing and then develop and pursue a long-term plan for housing stability.

GCHRC has a strong history of partnership and excellence in implementing HUD grants to support fair housing education. However, GCHRC's application to the Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) 2024 program was declined with HUD citing insufficient program funds to fund all qualified applications. GCRA responded to this need by supporting the Housing Counseling position last year. HUD did not make funding available in the subsequent year (2025), which again jeopardizes the Housing Counseling position at GCHRC. HUD has made funding available for the 2026 year, which GCHRC will be applying for in November of 2026, with award announcements coming next June, 2027. GCHRC has used this grant to fund its Fair Housing Counselor position, which leads GCHRC's fair housing program and conducts dozens of homebuyer education workshops, fair housing workshops, and counseling sessions annually. GCHRC has petitioned GCRA to renew the funding for one more year (October 2026 – October 2027). GCRA will ensure that there is no duplication of benefits.

Recommendation:
GCRA upholds the responsibility to support and advocate for the enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, also known as the Fair Housing Act, for Greenville County residents. GCRA is in a position to fund this request through the HOME-American Rescue Plan Grant of 2021. Financial assistance for the salary and benefits for a Housing Counselor is an eligible activity and cost.

Staff Recommendation: GCRA staff recommend funding this request at the full amount requested of **$97,000**.

2027 GCRA Board & Committee Meeting Schedule

Admin. Committee Dates (2nd Tuesday)	**Ops. Committee Dates (Thursday after Admin. Comm.)**	**Board Dates (4th Tuesday)**
January 12	January 14	January 26
February 9	February 11	February 23
March 9	March 11	March 23
April 13	April 15	April 27
May 11	May 13	May 25
June 8	June 10	June 22
July 13	July 15	July 27
August 10	August 12	August 24
September 14	September 16	September 28
October 12	October 14	October 26
November 9	November **10** (**Wednesday**)	November **18** (**Thursday**)
December 7 (Tuesday) – Board Holiday Lunch		

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION TBD

Administration Committee – 12:30 p.m.
Barry Coleman
Dean Doolittle
Jane Kizer
Joanna Reese
Paul Schweikardt
Diana Weir

Operations Committee – 12:30 p.m.
David Doser
Denise Ernul
James Hammond
Robert Julian
Matthew Nocella
DeAndra "DJ" Wilson

Board Meeting – 12:30 p.m.

Executive Committee – Meets as Needed
Board Chair –
Vice Chair –
Treasurer –
Administration Committee Chair –
Operations Committee Chair –
Board Secretary – Joe Smith

DRAFT

GCRA
Greenville County Redevelopment Authority

Memorandum

To: GCRA Board Members

From: Joanna Reese, Administration Committee Chair

Re: Administration Committee Meeting, November 10, 2026

Date: November 10, 2026

1. **Opening and Roll Call.** The Administration Committee met on Tuesday, November 10, 2026, at 12:30 p.m. Committee members present were Joanna Reese, Chair; Dean Doolittle, Vice Chair; Barry Coleman; Paul Schweikardt; and Diana Weir. Jane Kizer was absent. Staff present were Joe Smith, Executive Director; Pamela Proner, Finance Director; Francisco Arnaiz, Program Director; and Meg Macauley, Senior Executive Assistant & Office Manager.

2. **Invocation.** The invocation was offered by Ms. Proner.

* * * * *

Please review the following items of business discussed at the Administration Committee meeting. These items will not be discussed in the Board Meeting unless there is a question or comment about them.

3. **Administration Report**

   a. **Subrecipient Report.** Mr. Arnaiz stated that most subrecipients are drawing down according to schedule, noting one that is struggling to spend their allocation in a timely fashion. GCRA funded Greenville Together, a component of The United Way, on a one-time basis; staff have expanded the scope of their approved expenditures and are working to assist them in identifying eligible expenses. Discussion ensued regarding their activities and the status of their contract.

   Mr. Arnaiz noted that staff would be bringing an approval item to the board at their next meeting, seeking to provide one additional year of funding for the Human Relations Commission's fair housing counselor position using American Rescue Plan dollars.

4. Financial Reports

a. Financial Highlights – KPI. Ms. Proner presented the Financial Highlights for the month of September, stating that the cash balance is steady; she may change the presentation of the Cash line item to better represent our data, and explained her recent delays due to the audit and fiscal year close-out. Debt-to-income is back to normal after last month's significant change due to the Fairview loan payoff. Ms. Proner noted that she removed the percentages from the Government Funds portion of the report as they were not meaningful. The largest expense for the month was towards construction of the home at 106 Heatherly Drive; additionally, Gridley Place work began in September, and $34,000 in home repair was completed. The rental portfolio showed a slight loss as repair work continues to units in Greer, Miller Place Court, and Project 43 properties.

Ms. Proner noted a slight increase to the LGIP interest rate, which is now 3.97 percent, having generated monthly interest of $52,606 for year-to-date total interest of $162,341.

b. September Financials. There were no questions posed regarding the financial statements.

5. Other Business – Executive Director Updates.

a. Penny Tax Updates. Mr. Smith noted that while the County's proposed penny sales tax failed to pass, the City of Greenville's, as well as the Cities of Mauldin, Simpsonville, and Travelers Rest did pass.

b. Partner Projects. Mr. Smith stated that Project Railroad went before Greenville City Council for first reading to approve annexation and rezoning and it passed unanimously; a second reading and vote will be necessary in several weeks. Councilwoman Belge made positive remarks about GCRA's work.

Mr. Smith is in contact with Mr. Bernstein of Fitch Irick, the developer for Project Worley; permits are being requested so that construction may begin. Mr. Bernstein is in discussion with the City of Greenville regarding another property that is already in the city limits for which he would like to partner again with GCRA.

Mr. Smith shared that a great deal of illegal dumping has been occurring on the Project Drive-In site; GCRA is working with Greenville County's Litter Prevention staff to handle this. We will install a substantial gate and may add trail cameras to monitor the area. Additionally, someone seems to be living on the property in a tent, so staff will contact the Sheriff's Department; unfortunately, it is believed that the homelessness task force has been disbanded due to a lack of patrol deputies. Meanwhile, staff are preparing a request for proposals to invite development submissions. Mr. Smith has spoken to several individuals who are interested in the property and who are expected to submit proposals.

c. **Marketing/Sales.** Mr. Smith stated that after the recent sales and three more with closing dates this month, only one Fairview townhome remains to be sold. We hope to have it under contract and perhaps sold by calendar year-end.

d. **City of Greer Update.** Mr. Smith stated he, several staff members, and GCRA's attorney met yesterday with City of Greer leadership to discuss the possibility of them discontinuing their relationship with GCRA in favor of administering their own HUD funds directly. The meeting was cordial and a great deal of conversation centered around the path forward for Fairview. Discussion ensued regarding the Fairview townhome project history and how to complete additional phases of the project, as well as complications that would surely ensue if Greer were to become an entitlement community. Mr. Schweikardt asked if HUD had expressed an opinion about Greer's potential decision; Mr. Smith responded that HUD invited them to become an entitlement community based on population count.

e. **Response to Midterm Elections.** Mr. Smith noted that he is cautiously optimistic that HUD may allocate more money for CDBG and HOME. Meanwhile, we plan to become more sophisticated in how we loan our funds in order to create additional program income.

f. **Other Questions.** Mr. Coleman inquired about the Gridley Place project status and when the road would reopen. Mr. Smith responded that the underground utility work is complete and vertical construction is beginning. The road will remain closed until all construction is complete, as it is being used as a lay-down yard.

g. **Upcoming Dates.** Ms. Macauley reminded the committee that the November board meeting is the annual meeting at which time officers will be elected; she also noted the Thursday date the week before Thanksgiving. She also reminded the committee that RSVPs and entrée selections for the holiday luncheon on December 1st at Roost are needed in advance. She requested that board members wear their nametags at the luncheon as Mr. Cox, the new Operations Director, will be in attendance.

6. **Adjournment.** There being no further business and on a motion by Ms. Weir, seconded by Mr. Coleman, the meeting was adjourned at 1:24 p.m.

GCRA Financial Highlights
Month at a Glance September 2026

Government-Wide	Month	Change from Prior Month	%	Change from FY26 (FYTD)	%
Total Cash	16,621,263	Increase	0%	Increase	244%
Total Assets	48,125,040	Decrease	0%	Decrease	-2%
Notes Payable	4,360,333	Decrease	0%	Decrease	-10%
Debt-to-income			2%		3%
Net Position	40,821,776	Decrease	0%	Increase	0%
Net invest. in capital assets	11,800,570	Decrease	0%	Decrease	-1%
Unrestricted net assets	29,021,206	Decrease	0%	Increase	0%

Governmental Funds	Month	Change from Prior Month	YTD
Revenue	917,319	Increase	1,493,218
Expenditures	654,603	Increase	1,735,371
Net change in fund balance	262,716	Increase	(242,153)

Rental Portfolio	Month	Change from Prior Month	YTD
Net Income (loss)	(4,720)	Decrease	(3,315)

Local Government Invest. Pool				Interest	
LGIP Balance:	15,610,670	% of total cash:	94%	52,606	Month
		Avg Interest rate:	3.97%	162,341	FYTD

GCRA
Greenville County Redevelopment Authority

Memorandum

To: GCRA Board Members

From: David Doser, Operations Committee Chair

Re: Operations Committee Meeting, November 12, 2026

Date: November 12, 2026

1. **Opening and Roll Call.** The Operations Committee met on Thursday, November 12, 2026, at 12:30 p.m. Committee members present were David Doser, Chair; Denise Ernul; James Hammond; and Matthew Nocella. Robert Julian and DeAndra "DJ" Wilson were absent. Staff present were Joe Smith, Executive Director; Levi Chesney, Project Manager; and Meg Macauley, Senior Executive Assistant & Office Manager.

2. **Invocation.** The invocation was offered by Mr. Doser.

Action Item: The following items which were considered by the Operations Committee must be approved or ratified by the Board.

3. **Approval of Sales Profiles.** Mr. Chesney referenced page 12 of the packet and noted that in April, the committee and board approved construction of a replacement house at 106 Heatherly Drive in Judson. At the time, determination of a sales price was not necessary, as the original plan was to return the property to the rental portfolio. However, staff have since decided it would be prudent to place the home on the market for sale and therefore need to set a sales price. Appraisal indicates a value of $280,000, so staff are requesting approval to sell the newly constructed house for up to this amount. Discussion ensued as to the reason for converting the property from rental to homeownership/sale. Mr. Smith stated that ultimately, he made the decision to sell it because we have so little inventory for sale. Discussion also ensued regarding rental occupancy as well as relocation of privately-owned property that may result in people searching for affordable rentals. Management of our portfolio requires decisions to be made regarding rental versus homeownership units and is an ongoing management process.

   Mr. Hammond asked about GCRA's inventory of buildable lots. Mr. Smith responded that we have just a few in Brutontown, as well as several in Greer that are currently on hold until Greer's decision about administration of their HUD funds. Mr. Hammond also asked about the Fountain Inn project and any potential for additional land from Greenville County. Mr. Smith responded that after the donation from the County of the several large parcels, nothing more is currently expected. The Fountain Inn project is a possibility but will take a considerable amount of time to plan and develop. Much discussion ensued regarding GCRA's buildable properties and any future plans to develop such.

On a motion by Ms. Ernul, seconded by Mr. Hammond, the committee unanimously approved the sales price of up to $280,000 for the house at 106 Heatherly Drive.

Mr. Chesney then referenced page 15 of the packet and stated that in July, the committee and board approved construction of five single-family homes at Gridley Place; at the time, a sales price was not set. Staff are now seeking approval to set the sales prices so that marketing can begin before the homes are constructed; an appraisal indicates a value of $270,000 for these houses.

On a motion by Ms. Ernul, seconded by Mr. Hammond, the committee unanimously approved the sales price of up to $270,000 for each of the five houses at Gridley Place.

Mr. Chesney showed photos of the Gridley Place site with work underway. The road will remain closed until the project is complete, as it is being used as a lay-down area for supplies. Foundations and plumbing are already underway for the single-family homes for sale. Mr. Nocella asked about a projected completion date. Mr. Chesney responded that he expects certificates of occupancy around next summer. Staff hope to market the units well before completion.

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Please review the following items of business discussed at the Operations Committee meeting. These items will not be discussed in the Board meeting unless there is a question or comment about them.

4. Operations Reports

a. Rental Portfolio and Delinquency Snapshot. Mr. Chesney stated that the occupancy figure had been adjusted to reflect Mr. Doser's request to remove units that cannot be occupied, such as those being considered for demolition and replacement. Six units are now available and posted online, ready for new tenants.

The Rental Delinquency Report for October reflected a balance of $13,356, a decrease of $3,900 since September; no tenants are 60 days or more past due. Ms. Ernul asked if we expect delinquency to increase as the holidays approach. Mr. Chesney and Mr. Smith responded that staff always sees an increase at the holidays. Mr. Chesney noted an improved trend over the past six months.

b. Home Sales & Development Snapshot. Mr. Chesney referenced the summary and stated that after the recent sales and three more with closing dates this month, only one Fairview townhome remains to be sold. Mr. Hammond asked about the effect on our cash balance. Mr. Smith responded that after we repaid ourselves for the retired bank loan debt, we will net a small amount of program income with each remaining sale.

c. **Public Works, Partners, & Repairs Snapshot.** Mr. Chesney stated that he is reviewing proposals for the two lots in Greer, and depending upon their decision about how they will proceed, we may or may not continue towards construction on these lots. Mr. Doser asked if they have made the decision to administer their own HUD funds; Mr. Smith responded that while there has been considerable discussion, they have not yet made a final decision.

One more home repair project has been completed, bringing the total spent to $56,000 with $100,000 remaining. Ms. Ernul asked where contractors find invitations to bid. Mr. Chesney responded that we post on our website, on the South Carolina Business Opportunities (SCBO) website, and on the OpenGov platform that the County uses. Mr. Hammond asked, in light of the upcoming drought of properties to sell, about the possibility of energizing the home repair program. Mr. Smith noted that the repair program cannot directly substitute for the home sales program, as no program income is generated but in fact the money spent is not returned; it is essential, however, to our mission and for housing preservation. He noted that Program staff have been participating in neighborhood meetings to increase awareness of GCRA's activities and programs. Staff have received increased interest and applications lately, due in part to the increase in our community outreach. Programs like home repair always work best when neighborhood leaders are well-versed about them and can make connections between GCRA and residents who need assistance.

5. Other Business – Executive Director Updates.

a. **Penny Tax Updates.** Mr. Smith noted that while the County's proposed penny sales tax failed to pass, the City of Greenville's, as well as the Cities of Mauldin, Simpsonville, and Travelers Rest did pass. Discussion ensued.

b. **Partner Projects.** Mr. Smith stated that Project Railroad unanimously passed its first reading for annexation and rezoning at the most recent Greenville City Council meeting; a second reading and vote will be necessary in several weeks.

The permitting process is on schedule for Project Worley.

Mr. Smith has met with several individuals who are interested in partnering for Project Drive-In and who will likely submit proposals in response to our RFP.

c. **Upcoming Dates.** Ms. Macauley reminded the committee that the November board meeting is the annual meeting at which time officers will be elected; she also noted the Thursday date the week before Thanksgiving. She also reminded the committee that RSVPs and entrée selections for the holiday luncheon on December 1st at Roost are needed in advance. She requested that board members wear their nametags at the luncheon as Mr. Cox, the new Operations Director, will be in attendance.

d. **Other Questions.** Mr. Hammond asked for Mr. Smith's thoughts after the midterm election results. Mr. Smith responded that he is cautiously optimistic that HUD may allocate more money for CDBG and HOME given that chairmanships of the appropriations committee will change, and we hope to have continued support. However, conditions are right for another governmental shutdown. Meanwhile, we plan to work closer with the State Housing Authority for additional avenues of funding, and with Greenville County to keep our one million dollars per year from the Prisma settlement. Discussion ensued regarding how we see changes every two to four years and typically remain stable regardless of political changes.

6. **Adjournment.** There being no further business and on a motion by Mr. Hammond, seconded by Ms. Ernul, the meeting was adjourned at 1:32 p.m.

Fortune: Americans now spend nearly half of their budgets on food and housing alone, the biggest share in 15 years

November 2, 2026 – Joshua Hong

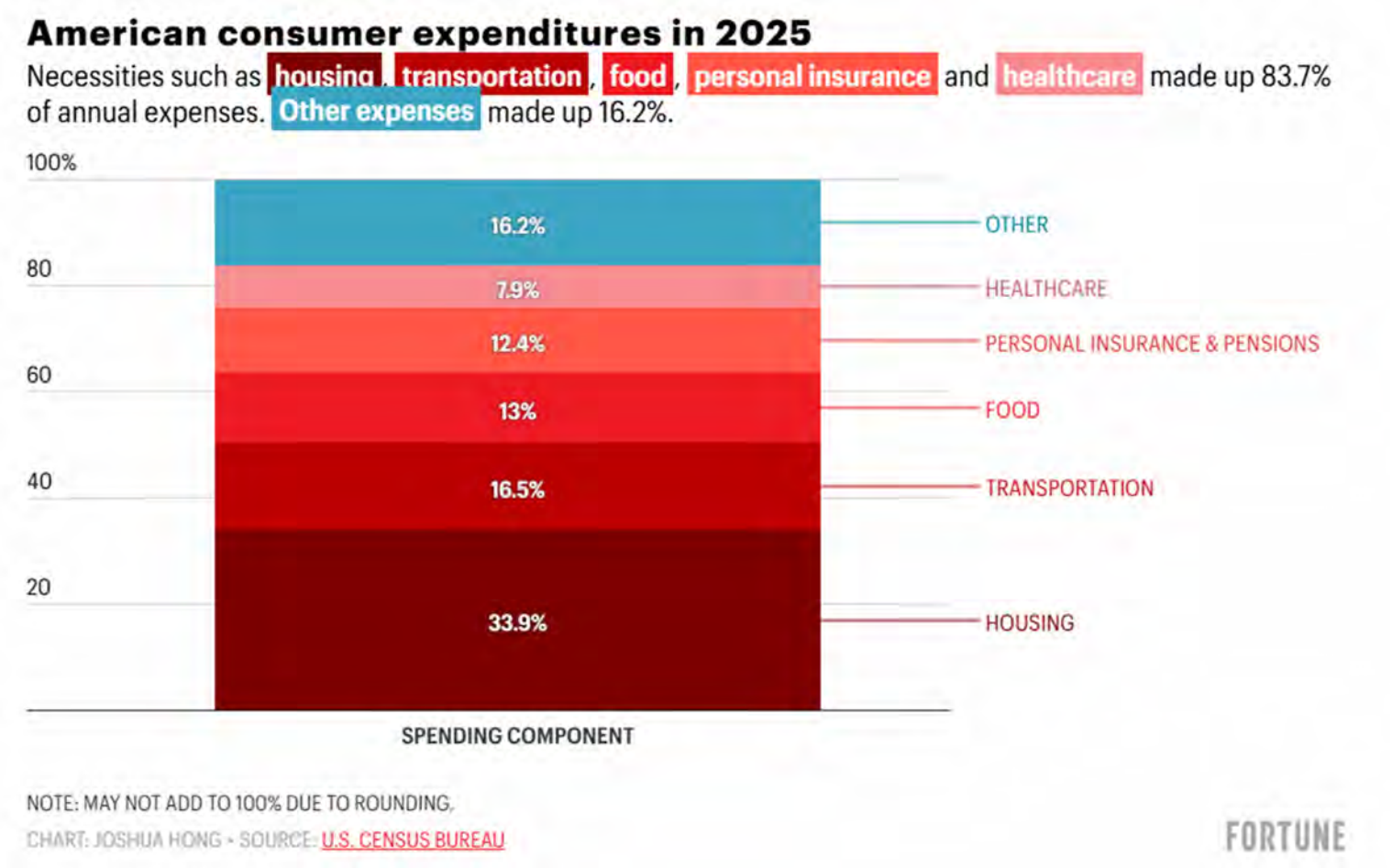
The affordability crisis has Americans feeling every penny that leaves their wallets. And according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly half of their spending is going towards necessities like housing and food—leaving little for quality of life.

New data from the BLS's annual Consumer Expenditures Report found that housing and food accounted for 46.9% of average expenditures in 2025. And that's because the pressure point of rising costs of essentials grew—housing expenditures climbed 5.8% and food spending increased 4.6% compared to the previous year.

The increase in spending on housing and food was particularly pronounced in housing. The average household spent $27,790 on housing in 2025, up from $26,266 in 2024. Within housing costs—which includes costs related to the housing itself, utilities, furnishings, supplies and operations—shelter costs rose even steeper. Average shelter expenditures increased 8%, rented dwellings climbed 10.8% and expenditures on owned dwellings increased 7.3%.

Food spending also rose—the average consumer spent $10,633 on food in 2025, up from $10,169 the previous year. The increase was partly driven by an 11.7% jump in spending on meat, poultry, fish and eggs.

Meanwhile, consumer inflation—as based on the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers—increased 2.6% in 2025, all while housing and food expenditures grew faster.

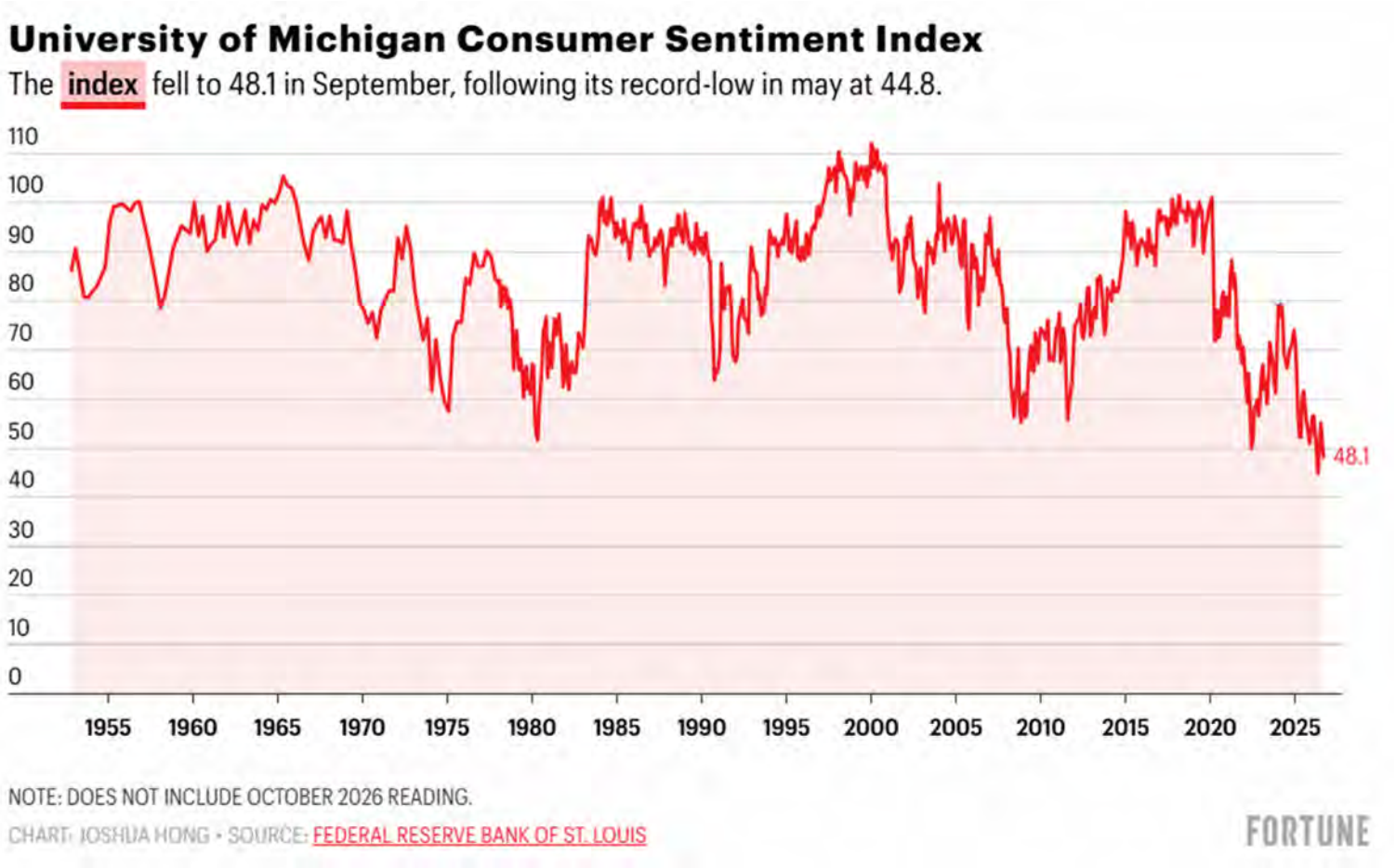


Article: *https://fortune.com/2026/11/02/americans-half-budget-food-housing-share-15-years/*

And that disconnect between finances and affordability has carried over into 2026—which is visible in the consumer sentiment.

The University of Michigan's October consumer sentiment index sat at 48.0, showing minimal change from September's 48.1—but 10.4% lower than its October 2025 reading of 53.6. The current economic conditions index also fell to 46.7 from 50.9 the previous month, a decline of 8.3%.

The October reading was the second-lowest in the survey's history, following a record low of 44.8 in May.



Joanne Hsu, director of the University of Michigan's Surveys of Consumers and a UM economist, said purchasing power continued to dominate Americans' views of the economy.

"This month's decline in the Current Conditions subindex was driven entirely by buying conditions for durable goods, which plunged 18% on the basis of higher interest rates and rising concerns about the affordability of such purchases," Hsu said in a university press release. "Purchasing power continues to dominate consumer views of the economy. Sentiment is now 10% below a year ago and 15% below February, just prior to the Iran conflict."

2025 woes continue in 2026

The spending pressures documented in the BLS report haven't disappeared in the new calendar year. According to The Urban Institute's October tracker, 49% of people in American families lacked the resources to cover the true costs of essential expenses and live securely in their communities.

"Affordability has become a central issue in American political discourse and in the everyday lives of millions of Americans struggling to get by and get ahead," the report read. "Political candidates as diverse as President Trump in 2024 and New York City Mayor Mamdani in 2025 focused on the high cost of necessities in their campaigns. The issue resonates with the public—as nearly four out of five Americans are pessimistic about economic conditions improving in 2026."

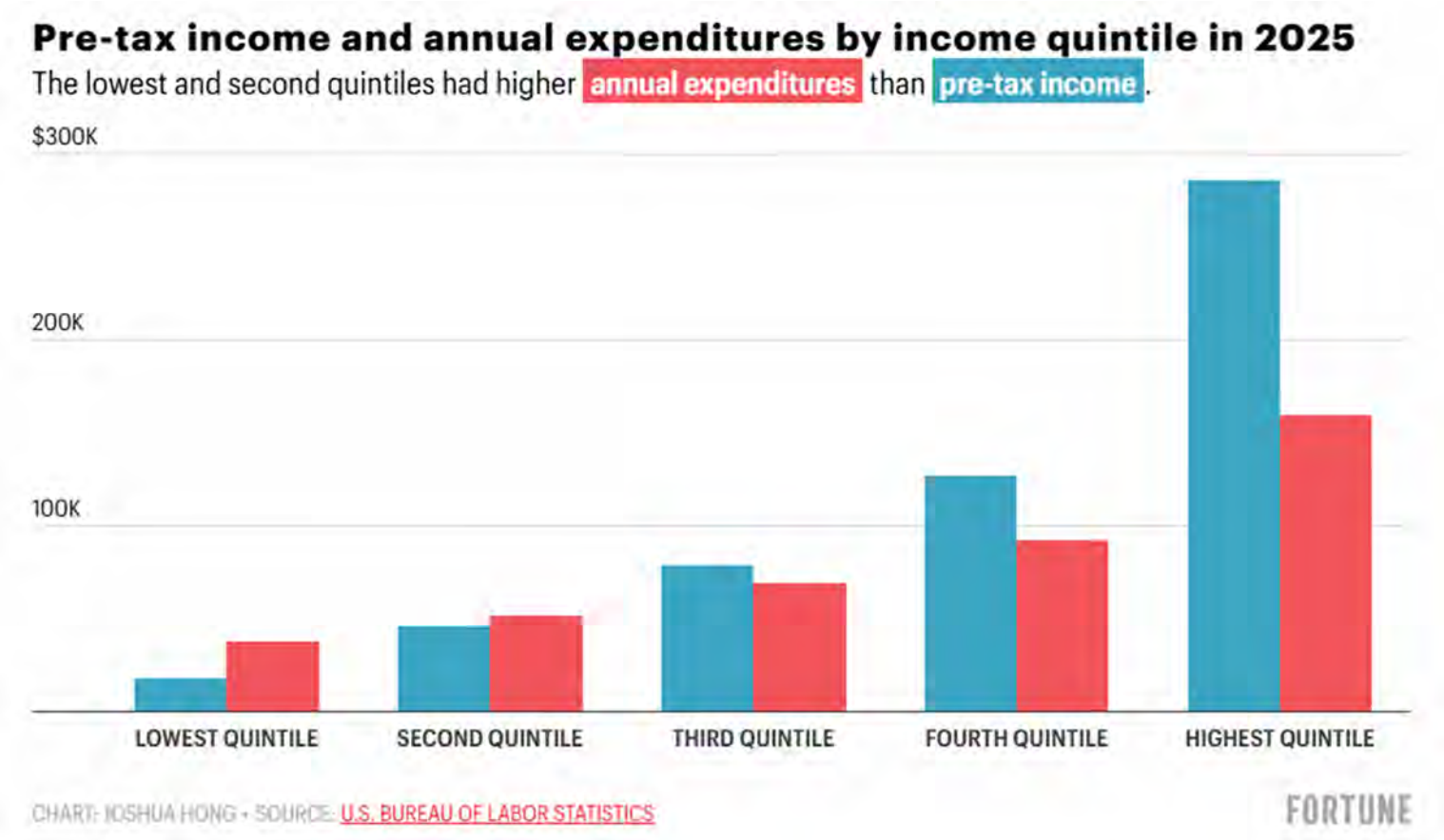
Housing remained a particularly significant source of pressure. According to the institute, renters are paying about $710 more per month for housing than they did in 2017, while families with two young children face an additional $6,600 in annual childcare costs compared with a decade earlier.

And according to a Pew Research Center survey carried out between July and August, 44% of U.S. adults experienced at least one financial hardship from medical care, daily transportation costs, rent and mortgages, or food from a food bank or pantry. Among lower-income adults, that figure reached 71%, compared to 39% of middle-income adults and 13% of upper-income adults.

Higher expenses, lower incomes

According to the BLS report, consumers in the bottom two quintiles of income—households making less than about $60,000—have higher annual expenses than income before taxes. The lowest quintile made $18,125 in pre-tax income, but had $37,935 in annual expenditures.

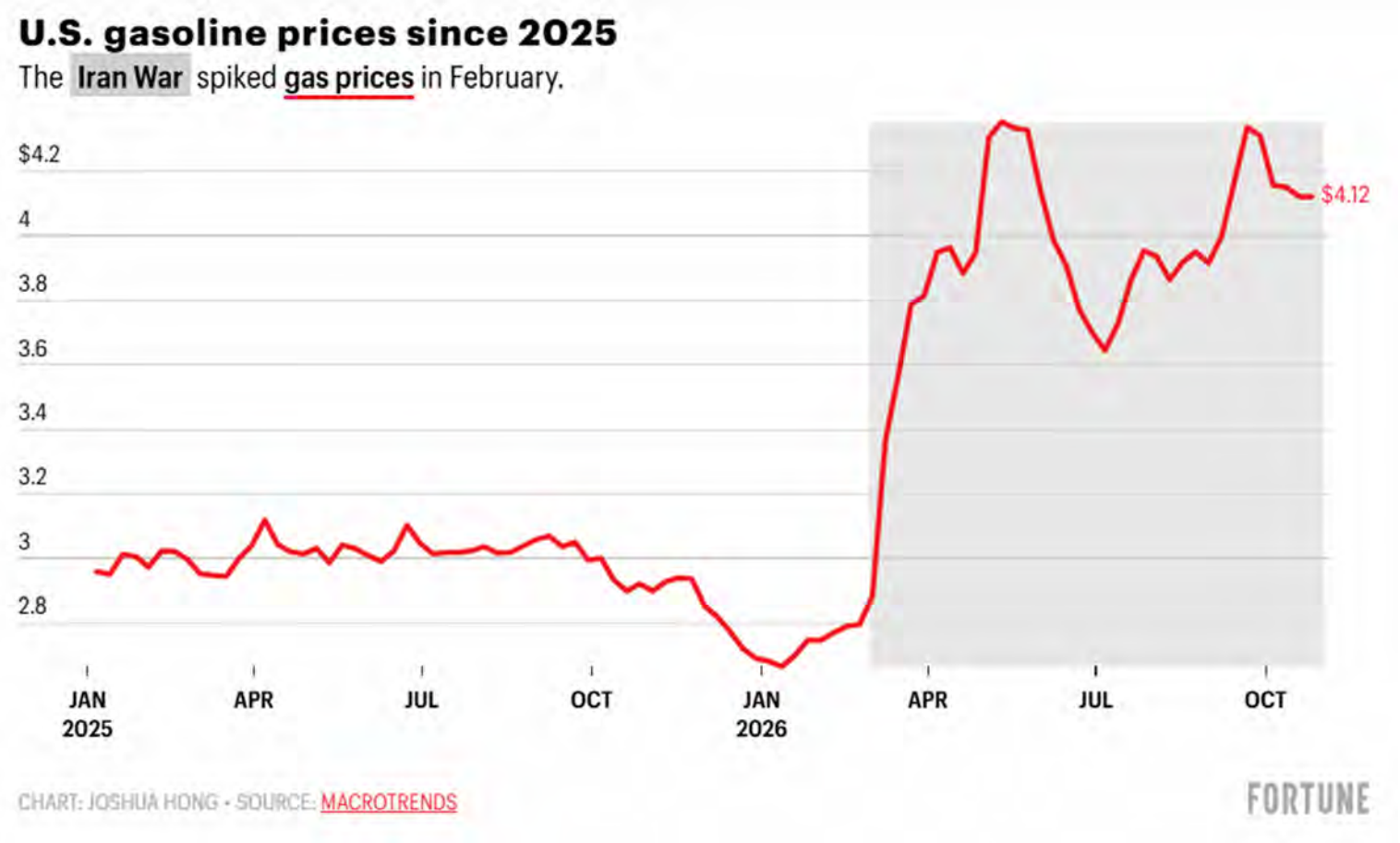
The BLS did acknowledge that incomes also rose: the average pretax income climbed 6.4% to $110,847 in 2025, faster than the 4.3% rise in average spending to $81,905.



Americans also spent 4.4% more on healthcare in 2025 compared to the previous year, from $6,197 to $6,470, with health insurance accounting for much of the increase—average annual spending on insurance premiums climbed 6.3%, from $4,055 to $4,310. That means the average consumer spent about $540 a month on healthcare, with about two-thirds of that going to health insurance alone.

Utility bills also increased as well, with electricity, natural gas, water and other service bills running Americans about $411 a month in the past year—a 4.1% increase.

Transportation spending—the second-largest component of consumer expenses in 2025—rose a modest 1.3% from the previous year. But the category shows a notable divergence as American expenses on gasoline and other fuels actually fell 5.4%. However, the BLS report covers the calendar year 2025, meaning the gasoline price hikes from the war on Iran isn't included.



Average gas prices in 2025 sat at $3.10 for the year, according to the Energy Information Administration, compared to the agency's forecast average $3.91 for 2026.

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https://www.postandcourier.com/greenville/news/greenville-county-penny-tax-budget-cuts/article_1c8a09f8-6892-4207-94d3-194f9c2a8ebf.html

‘There is no way forward’: With penny tax dead, Greenville County turns to budget cuts

BY SETH TAYLOR STAYLOR@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

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The estimated cost for a Woodruff Road decongestion project has more than doubled to more than $277 million.

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GREENVILLE COUNTY — In the wake of the fourth failed attempt to pass a penny sales tax for road repairs, the county is left holding the pieces.

What’s left is more than $2 billion in estimated road repairs, a budget that officials say is already spread thin and voters who’ve made clear they **don’t want new taxes**.

“There is no way forward,” said County Councilmember Curt McGahhey, who became one of the chief proponents of the tax after opposing a similar referendum in 2024. Without the tax, McGahhey and other County Council members said the only option is to cut the budget further.

“The county has to get leaner, and with leanness comes a little bit less service,” McGahhey said. “So, based on how people voted — they may realize it or not — people voted for less services.”

The **1 percent sales tax** would have raised nearly $1 billion for road repairs and provided funds for preservation and public transportation. And it would have relieved pressure on the county’s $475 million budget as officials face demands to increase funding for everything from affordable housing to law enforcement.

But it also would have raised the countywide sales tax from 6 percent to 7 percent, which proved too much for voters.

Without the tax, the county will have to make difficult budget decisions, council members said.

Frequent targets, like funding for community organizations and the Greenville Transit Authority, are back on the chopping block, they said, foreshadowing a return to the budget fights of the past two years.

“I just know that if you want to improve road safety, decrease congestion and have nicer roads to drive on, we need another funding source,” McGahhey said.

How did we get here?

The November vote is just the latest twist in years of debate about whether to use a 1 percent sales and use tax to fund road repairs.

According to a **2024 analysis** from county staff, 60 percent of roads were in either “fair” or “poor” condition. Staff found that it would take **$2 billion** to simply resurface those roads, let alone complete other improvements.

County Council members responded by proposing a 1 percent sales tax, which voters voted down in 2024. After it failed, officials spent the next two years in **fractious meetings**, **cutting budget items** and redirecting money to the roads.

In the **2026 budget**, the county devoted $27.5 million to repairs. Penny tax advocates have pointed out it will take decades to complete the work at that rate.



Greenville County Councilmember Curt McGahhey became one of the chief proponents of this year 1 percent sales tax after opposing a similar referendum in 2024.

CONOR HUGHES/STAFF

This year, several County Council members — including multiple who opposed the 2024 tax — said the county had exhausted its resources and must pass a tax to fix its roads. This time, they also included money for preservation and public transportation.

But again, 51.5 percent of voters voted it down.

“I'm not for new taxes at all,” McGahhey said. “But I do see that if we want something, we do have to pay for it. We're not going to have beautiful roads on our current budget. It's just impossible.”

Why the tax failed

The tax faced an uphill battle from the start, coming just two years after voters rejected a similar proposal.

Carlton Owen, who led the **campaign for the tax** and is one of the county’s leading preservationists, blamed the failure on economic concerns, which made people reluctant to vote in favor. The four simultaneous city taxes also might have weighed on voters’ minds, he said.

County Council members on both sides said voters simply didn't trust the county government to manage a new tax.

"In a way, it's miraculous that 49.5 percent of people supported it," Owen said.

The introduction of municipal penny taxes complicated things, Owen said, and he believes the county's tax would have passed had the cities not put their own referendums on the ballot.

At the same time as the countywide tax failed, municipal taxes passed in Greenville, Simpsonville, Mauldin and Travelers Rest.

Greenville officials — who championed the new legislation that allowed cities to pass their own penny taxes — celebrated in the days after its tax sailed to victory, nearly 67 percent to 33 percent.

Mayor Knox White called it "extraordinary" and "unprecedented."

"We are enormously gratified that city voters voiced such overwhelming confidence in the city's direction," he said.

White said he doesn't think the city taxes had anything to do with the county tax not passing, pointing to the wide margin of city voters who voted for both taxes. Greenville voters in particular voted heavily in favor of both.

A Post and Courier analysis found that city voters largely supported the tax. Much of the opposition was focused in rural northern and southern Greenville County.

In precincts within the four cities with a municipal tax, roughly 54 percent of voters supported the county's tax, compared to 44 percent outside the cities. That's an approximate number, because a few of those precincts include both city and county voters.

But there were some voters inside the cities who voted for the city tax but not the county tax. In total, about 60 percent of voters supported their city's referendum, a 6 percentage point difference. If that gap had been smaller, the county's tax might have passed.

Beyond the headwinds the tax suffered, it also faced organized opponents in both the Greenville County Republican Party and sitting County Council members.

After the election, the party took credit for the tax's defeat in a press release, hailing it as "another major victory at the ballot box." During a meeting days later, members cheered and even offered a prayer of thanks.

In an interview, party chair Jeff Davis said officials tried to "ramrod" the tax through.

"I think a lot of the County Council members that are kind of on our side may be excited about working more cooperatively," Davis said, suggesting that the tax's opponents — such as Councilmembers Steve Shaw or Garey Collins — have a better plan to fix the roads.

Both Shaw and Collins vocally opposed the tax, arguing in interviews that voters have no reason to give the county more money when they don't trust it to manage the money it already has.

"I'm patiently waiting for GOP leadership, Collins and Shaw, to give us the program (on) how we move forward with our roads," McGahhey said. "Patiently waiting. Eagerly awaiting. Patiently and eagerly awaiting their solution."

What's the plan?

It's not that the county doesn't need more money, Collins said. It's that the county must do more to show voters it needs the money first.

"If you don't have the trust of the folks, they're not going to give you a dime, let alone a penny," Collins said.

He suggested measures to cut the budget further, focus on "core functions of government" and slow down development. Then, if the county can pass those policies and stay on track for the next four years, Collins said he might be open to a new tax.

Shaw proposed a much smaller repair plan, in part because of his own lack of trust in the government he oversees.

The estimated $2 billion price tag proposed by county staff is “ridiculous,” he said. He said he hasn’t yet been able to calculate a number he believes is more realistic.

Shaw’s plan involves focusing exclusively on county-owned roads, leaving the state roads (roughly 40 percent of all roads in the county) to be repaired by the S.C. Department of Transportation. SCDOT is dealing with a **large backlog** of its own and has struggled to keep up with repairs.



Greenville County Councilmember Steve Shaw was one of the few sitting officials to oppose the 1 percent sales tax this year.

FILE

Shaw said he’d be open to passing a smaller tax increase, perhaps a quarter penny tax, to fund repairs one or two roads at a time, returning to voters every couple of years.

While he acknowledged that approach would be much slower, he said it’s the only way he feels confident the money will be spent appropriately.

“I think the public understands the government can only do so much,” he said, blaming the county’s problems on runaway growth. “If just too many people are moving here, nothing can handle it.”

McGahhey said now, without the tax, his goal is to squeeze as much as possible from the county’s budget, redirecting what’s left to road repairs.

Still, he compared that solution to “putting a Band-Aid over a bullet hole.”

SETH TAYLOR

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