City of Green Lake Referendum

General Election Ballot April 1, 2025

Summary of the Reason for the Referendum

The State of Wisconsin limits how much cities can raise property taxes each year, allowing increases only if there is new construction or voter approval. The City of Green Lake, with little new development, struggles to generate enough revenue to cover rising costs, as tax revenue has grown by just 0.97% per year while inflation has averaged 2.59%.

Only 29-35% of property tax bills go to City services, and higher property values don’t increase city revenue - only the tax burden distribution changes. The City’s budget deficits have required using savings and short-term loans, but those funds are running low.

If the referendum passes, the City’s tax rate would rise from $4.46 to about $7.50 per $1,000 of property value, increasing taxes by about $759.38 per year for a $250,000 home. If it doesn’t pass, the city will have to cut services, including police, fire, road maintenance, and parks.

Without new revenue, financial challenges will continue, leaving residents with a choice between raising taxes or reducing essential services.