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Charleston-area mayors send letter requesting more time to decide top projects for county sales tax

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Charleston Mayor William Cogswell, Mount Pleasant Mayor Will Haynie and North Charleston Mayor Reggie Burgess.

FILE/PROVIDED

CHARLESTON — The three mayors from the county's largest municipalities have asked for more time to curate their wish lists for a potential 2026 transportation sales tax.

The request comes less than a week before county staff was set to debut some municipal infrastructure priorities to County Council.

After voters overwhelmingly rejected the transportation sales tax in 2024, County Council revived the discussion last year by establishing a special committee dedicated to the tax. The potential bump would raise \$4.25 billion over 25 years, which would be a 21 percent decrease from the \$5.4 billion expected from the 2024 tax — if voters had approved it.

County staff hosted public meetings in area cities and towns over the past few months and plan to share both community input and municipal priorities at council's next meeting Jan. 13.

The county previously asked for these lists by Dec. 1, and then extended that deadline to Dec. 30.

Now, Charleston Mayor William Cogswell, North Charleston Mayor Reggie Burgess and Mount Pleasant Mayor Will Haynie have sent a letter to former County Council Chairman Kylon Middleton requesting that the county extend its deadline again, to Feb. 6.

Mount Pleasant leaders were clear that they wouldn't meet the original deadline, and now neither will Charleston or North Charleston. The three municipalities are working together to review which projects they'll submit to the county and "align where appropriate," according to the letter dated Jan. 6.

"As the three largest municipalities in the County, our residents are also County residents, and we believe that continued coordination among local governments helps reinforce public understanding and confidence in this process," the letter signed by Cogswell, Burgess and Haynie reads.



January 5, 2026

The Honorable Kylon Middleton Chair
Charleston County Council Charleston County Government
Delivered electronically

Dear Chairman Middleton,

On behalf of the municipalities of Charleston, North Charleston, and Mount Pleasant, we write to express our appreciation for Charleston County's leadership in administering the Transportation Sales Tax process and for the ongoing coordination between the County and its municipalities.

We recognize that this effort is County led, and we are grateful for the opportunity to engage collaboratively as the process moves forward. Our municipalities share a strong interest in supporting a thoughtful, transparent, and well-coordinated approach that reflects both regional priorities and community input across Charleston County.

As the three largest municipalities in the County, our residents are also County residents, and we believe that continued coordination among local governments helps reinforce public understanding and confidence in this process. With that in mind, our municipalities have been working together in a spirit of cooperation and regional partnership to review projects, align where appropriate, and ensure that public feedback is fully considered.

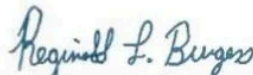
To support this collaborative work, we respectfully request a brief extension until February 6 to finalize our coordinated submissions. This additional time will allow our municipalities to continue working together thoughtfully and provide the County with the most informed and well-considered recommendations possible.

We appreciate the County's partnership and leadership in this effort and remain committed to working constructively together in service of the broader Charleston County community.

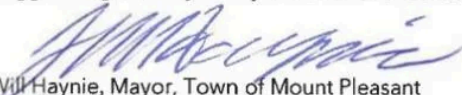
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William Cogswell".

William Cogswell, Mayor, City of Charleston

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Reggie Burgess".

Reggie Burgess, Mayor City of North Charleston

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Will Haynie".

Will Haynie, Mayor, Town of Mount Pleasant

Cc: Eric Adams, Charleston County Public Works Director; Kristen Wurster, Charleston County Clerk

Mayors from Charleston, North Charleston and Mount Pleasant sent a letter to Charleston County Council requesting more time to submit their priority lists for a 2026 transportation sales tax.

Mount Pleasant's four-member transportation committee met in December and again in January to discuss a list of projects which consisted mostly of new pedestrian paths and upgrades to existing intersections. The full nine-member council has yet to discuss the list, but plans to do so at its annual retreat Jan. 23.

Support for another sales tax in Mount Pleasant has been tepid. Unresolved tensions lingering from ongoing disagreements about how to expand S.C. Highway 41, a project funded by the 2016 transportation sales tax, remain.

Town leaders have expressed frustration with the project, and threatened to withhold support for a future referendum as a result.

At a **Jan. 5 transportation committee meeting**, Haynie said he wouldn't leave Mount Pleasant's share of a possible \$4.25 billion sitting on the table, but would wait until after the January retreat to present their wish list. Charleston and North Charleston agreed to do the same, he said.

"We're asking them to wait until after our council retreat to let (County Council) know where we're going and then after we do that, we've got to come up with something that wins for everybody," Haynie said. "It's got to win for North Charleston. It's got to win for Charleston."

Last month, Burgess said the city's priorities focused on connectivity throughout the region, not just North Charleston. He said working alongside the mayors in the region is crucial for solving traffic matters.

"As a mayor, I'm looking at real issues that we can work on together, collectively, to solve a lot of issues that are happening in our individual communities," he said.

Burgess did not respond to a request for comment about the letter by time of publication.

Since Oct. 14, Charleston City Council and its Traffic and Transportation Committee have met multiple times to discuss the city's **priority list of road and infrastructure**, which was finalized at a Dec. 16 meeting.

The stated expectation is that Cogswell would forward that list on to the county, but that has not happened.

Deja Knight McMillan, spokeswoman for the city of Charleston, emphasized a favored talking point of Cogswell's about the need for a "holistic" and "regional" approach to issues like traffic that flow freely between the three largest municipalities in the county.

"We want to make sure we're in lockstep," she said. "So that the projects work together and not against one another."

The county doesn't expect the ask to delay its process in pursuing a 2026 tax referendum, Chloe Field, county public information officer, said.

She said county staff will still share public input they gathered on the referendum at the Jan. 13 County Council meeting and discuss municipal priorities based on the information they already have.

Field added County Council and staff are working to schedule a workshop in early February to develop a draft of priority projects for the transportation sales tax.

Kenna Coe and Ali Rockett contributed to this report.

MADELINE QUON

Maddy Quon covers Charleston County for The Post and Courier. Most recently from Tokyo, Japan, Maddy graduated from the University of Mississippi where she studied journalism.

ANNA SHARPE

Anna Sharpe covers Mount Pleasant, Isle of Palms, Sullivan's Island and Folly Beach for the Post and Courier. She graduated from Winthrop University. She previously wrote for the Moultrie News in Mount Pleasant.