

## In Review

*(Note: This Annual Report to the Citizens covers April 1 2020 to March, 31 2021)*

2020 was a year of unparalleled challenges that upended the ordinary day of the City, County, State and globe. As the world locked down, it was essential for City Council Meetings to transition to a virtual platform. Council staff took the lead and facilitated City Council Meetings in a hybrid format. Coordinated hybrid meetings on both Microsoft Teams and in City Council Chambers allowed for the continued function of the legislative body, providing uninterrupted service to the citizens of Colorado Springs. In addition to supporting virtual meetings, staff worked to safeguard citizen's ability to provide public comment to the City Council. While the COVID-19 Pandemic was a monumental change to the everyday function of local government, the City Council continued to work, advocate and listen to the priorities of the citizens of Colorado Springs. Council passed over 295 ordinances and resolutions, established the Law Enforcement and Transparency Commission, advocated for affordable housing and propelled the City Strategic Plan forward.



*City Council and Mayor John Suthers at the City's Swearing-In Ceremony on April 16, 2019*

## **THANK YOU DON, JILL, AND ANDY FOR 8 GREAT YEARS ON COUNCIL**

This April, we gave a fond farewell to two of our term limited Councilmembers, Don Knight and Jill Gaebler, with Andy Pico vacating his seat in January as he moved on

to the Colorado House of Representatives. The trio accomplished many great things for Colorado Springs during their time on City Council.

### **Don Knight**

Throughout his two terms on City Council, Don Knight was a steadfast steward to his district and small business in Colorado Springs. Don's 26 years in the United States Air Force made for a detail-oriented focus on legislation while on City Council. Don served District 1 and all of Colorado Springs with great integrity and passion while also being a champion for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs in local schools. He has lived in Colorado Springs since 1990 with his wife, Elaine, and raised their three children here. During his time with City Council, Don served on many boards and committees including the Military Liaison Committee, Public Safety Committee and the Budget Committee. As a Colorado Springs Utilities Board member, he also served as the Utilities Finance Committee Chair as well as served on the Program Management Review Committee.





*Councilmember Knight addressing school students on the steps of City Hall.*



## **Jill Gaebler**

Councilmember Jill Gaebler represented District 5 for two terms and served on Council for eight years. In addition to being President Pro Tem of City Council (dates), she also served as the Colorado Springs Utilities Chair (CSU) in her final two years. While serving as Chair for CSU, she helped shepherd the Electronic Integrated Resource Plan process thereby setting the long-term strategic plan for energy consumption in the Pikes Peak Region. Councilmember Gaebler was a champion of improved road infrastructure that supports all modes of transportation within in the City of Colorado Springs. Her advocacy propelled the addition of road calming measures in busy downtown neighborhoods and the launch of PikeRide, a community bicycle program that promotes accessible and healthy forms of mobility for all. In addition to her other duties on City Council, she served as Chair for Pikes Peak Rural Transit Authority, and liaison to various Boards, Commissions, and Committees. (Food Policy Advisory Board, Commission on Aging, Strategic Plan Committee)





*City Councilmember Gaebler being interviewed by a news reporter. One of many over her 8 years on Council.*



## **Andres Pico**

During his eight years of public service on City Council, Andy served as both the Chair and Vice Chair of the Colorado Springs Utilities Board of Directors, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments and the City Audit Committee, along with serving as the Council representative to the Airport Advisory Commission and Investment Advisory Committee. His consistent leadership, integrity and transparency have made an indelible mark on the City of Colorado Springs.





*Councilmembers Pico and Knight following a swearing in ceremony at the Pioneer's Museum.*



*Mike O'Malley is sworn in as the District 6 City Councilmember to fill the remainder of Andy Pico's term.*

# STRATEGIC PLAN (OPPOSITE THE CITY BUDGET PAGE)

## City Council Strategic Plan Objectives 2020-2024

### Communication

(Building Community and Collaborative Relationships)

Increase communication with constituents at all levels of interaction in order to promote a culture of civic engagement

### Communication Initiatives

**A.** Develop a Constituent Response Specialist to increase responsiveness and consistency in public messaging

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 7 actionable items**

**B.** Increase methods of communication to constituents through opportunities such as town halls, policy briefs, email announcements, social media messaging, etc.

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 10 actionable items**

**C.** Develop a Civics 101 training for new City employees to explain the role of City Council, the legislative process and methods of civic engagement

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 4 actionable items**

**D.** Increase the value of Boards and Commissions with an emphasis on action items and annual reporting requirements to City Council

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 8 actionable items**

**E.** Increase methods and frequency of communication between Executive staff and City Council through quarterly reports and staff planning lunch updates

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 11 actionable items**

### PlanCOS

(Promoting Job Creation)

Facilitate the implementation of the City's Comprehensive Plan, Plan COS

### PlanCOS Initiatives

**A.** Support the Executive Branch's hiring of a Planning and Land Use consultant to review and provide recommendations on City Code Chapter 7



▶ **Progress: Accomplished 6 actionable items**

**B.** Actively participate in thoughtful discussion and drafting of legislation related to PlanCOS and other planning priorities

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 4 actionable items**

**C.** Incentivize developers to build in underserved areas of Colorado Springs, such as Southeast, and support general infill policies and programs through development of URA criteria

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 1 actionable items**

**D.** Work with the Planning Department to develop a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the processes of Special Districts, including GIS map visualizations and debt issuance overview

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 4 actionable items**

## **Regional Collaboration**

(Building Community and Collaborative Relationships)

Partner with local governments and regional agencies in order to share knowledge and increase efficiencies in the Pikes Peak Region

## **Regional Collaboration Initiatives**

**A.** Conduct an annual meeting with County Commissioners, and quarterly meetings between City Council and County Commissioner leadership

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 3 actionable items**

**B.** Continue coordination between the City of Colorado Springs and Colorado Springs Utilities for Public Works and Streets projects with a reduction in duplicative street repairs

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 3 actionable items**

**C.** Continue engagement with military installations through community opportunities such as Military Affairs Council with the Chamber of Commerce and the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, and establish a Councilmember as the military affairs liaison to increase direct communication with military installations

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 3 actionable items**

D. Organize an annual meet and greet program with regional municipal partners including Manitou Springs, Fountain, Pueblo, Monument, etc. and attempt to identify areas of mutual concern

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 2 actionable items**

## **Safe and Resilient Communities**

(Building Community and Collaborative Relationships)

Identify legislative opportunities to enhance long range objectives with meaningful impacts

## **Safe and Resilient Communities Initiatives**

A. Support the City's financial resiliency through work with Executive staff to develop a budgetary resiliency plan and associated metrics

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 3 actionable items**

B. Support Public Safety initiatives through funding and the annual budget process

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 5 actionable items**

C. Encourage connectivity across the City through innovative approaches to transportation solutions

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 4 actionable items**

D. Increase public awareness and encourage legislation that proactively supports issues of affordable housing and homelessness

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 7 actionable items**

E. Increase public awareness and support issues of the Urban Tree Canopy and Wildland Urban Interface

▶ **Progress: Accomplished 4 actionable items**

## **CITY BUDGET**

- **Overview**

The City's Budget Committee comprised of four Councilmembers (Bill Murray, Andy Pico, Don Knight, and Tom Strand) and representatives from the Administrative Branch (Mayor's Office, Finance Department, and City Attorney's Office) that met frequently as part of the collaborative effort to create a fair and balanced City budget.

**2021 Budget Highlights include:**

- \$2.0 million of increased funding for 10 new sworn Police positions and 8 new sworn Fire positions and equipment, including re-establishing a dedicated Hazardous Materials response team and the transition of a medical squad to an engine company for the Fire Department
- \$600,000 of increased funding for park maintenance, tree planting and initiation of the street tree inventory per the Urban Forest Management Plan
- \$1.7 million continued funding for the City's Americans with Disabilities Act operating and capital programs
- \$2,000,000 of increased funding for City fleet and equipment replacement
- \$500,000 of continued funding to support shelter bed operations for the homeless population
- \$760,000 increased funding to Mountain Metro Transit, including a route to the Airport and Amazon to be established in the 2nd half of 2021
- \$1.6 million continuing support to address Information Technology core infrastructure, applications, and cybersecurity improvements and sustainment
- \$2.0 million for Police and Fire sworn step increases, pay progression for civilian employees, and full-year funding for the portion of compensation that was phased in during 2020
- \$1.1 million increased operating and capital funding for snow/ice removal operations
- \$2.2 million for critical facility maintenance - spread across the City's many facilities including police and fire stations, parks facilities, public works facilities, and fuel infrastructure
- \$670,000 increased funding for city-wide Capital Improvement Projects
- \$850,000 increased funding for the state-mandated 811 utility locate team

## **VIRTUAL COUNCIL**

Strategic Plan: Communication

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, City Hall was closed to the public. Council Staff performed a monumental challenge of adapting City Council Meetings to an all virtual environment. Upgrades included a new chambers computer, installation of partitions

and facilitation of City Council Meetings through Microsoft Teams. . Staff supported Council using new technologies by providing individual trainings and guidebooks. Councilmembers had the option of continuing to be in Chambers for meetings or logging in from home. Although City Hall was closed to the public for much of 2020, City Council and staff prioritized citizen's ability to engage with City Council during citizen comment at Regular Meetings and through electronic correspondence.



*City Council Administrator, Emily Evans, managing a hybrid in person/virtual council meeting.*



*City Council hybrid in person and virtual meeting.*



*Partitions with plexiglass separate Councilmembers as they sit at the dais during Council Meetings during the Covid-19 Pandemic.*

# RULES AND PROCEDURES REWRITE

(PLACEHOLDER)

## LAW ENFORCEMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION

Strategic Plan: Safe and Resilient Communities

In June, City Council created the Law Enforcement Transparency and Accountability Commission. City Council received over 800 applications from people wanting to serve on the Commission. After a thorough and time consuming review process, 11 members and two alternates were appointed in September. This Commission was tasked with assisting City Council with budget, appropriation, and resource allocation recommendations utilizing data driven audits of law enforcement performance. They also provide a conduit to share the concerns and needs of both citizens and the Police Department, while also analyzing and providing feedback to Council with policy recommendations and promoting improved understanding and relationships between the Police Department and the public.



*Mayor Suthers and Councilmembers stand on the City Hall Rotunda steps with some of the LETAC Commissioners following their appointment.*

# INVESTING IN COLORADO SPRINGS' FUTURE

City Council's main workload pertains to land use items, but their job as the legislative branch of our City's government doesn't stop with zoning. Despite the challenges of 2020, City Council passed 258 (PLACEHOLDER) pieces of legislation to build upon the City's Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan: Plan COS

## Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Beginning in 2019 with extensive input at public meetings, town halls, and online comments, the City Planning Commission gave many presentations regarding ADUs at Council Work Sessions. On June 23, 2020, Colorado Springs City Council approved three ordinances pertaining to accessory dwelling units and accessory family suites in single-family zones and multi-family zones. The approved ordinances went into effect on July 6, 2020.

## Ordinance Amendments

- Accessory Family Suites
- Definitions & Accessory Dwelling Units
- Accessory Dwelling Unit Overlay

For more information visit: [coloradosprings.gov/adu](https://coloradosprings.gov/adu)



*Councilmember Knight addressing constituents during this 2020 Town Hall.*

## Public Art Master Plan

The adoption of Public Art COS by City Council follows endorsements by the Public Art Commission, Planning Commission and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board. Central to Public Art COS is a mission to build a robust, impactful and more widely accessible public art program. The community-based and action-oriented document aims to better educate and inform residents on the importance of public art as a place-making tool for creating and inspiring community identity. It also provides numerous, prioritized goals and strategies for the growth and sustainability of the public art program.



*The sculpture "I've Been Dreaming to be a Tree" by artist Byeong Doo Moon. Located downtown on Cascade Avenue, the sculpture was donated to the city's art collection by Community Ventures in 2018.*

## Panorama Park Renovation

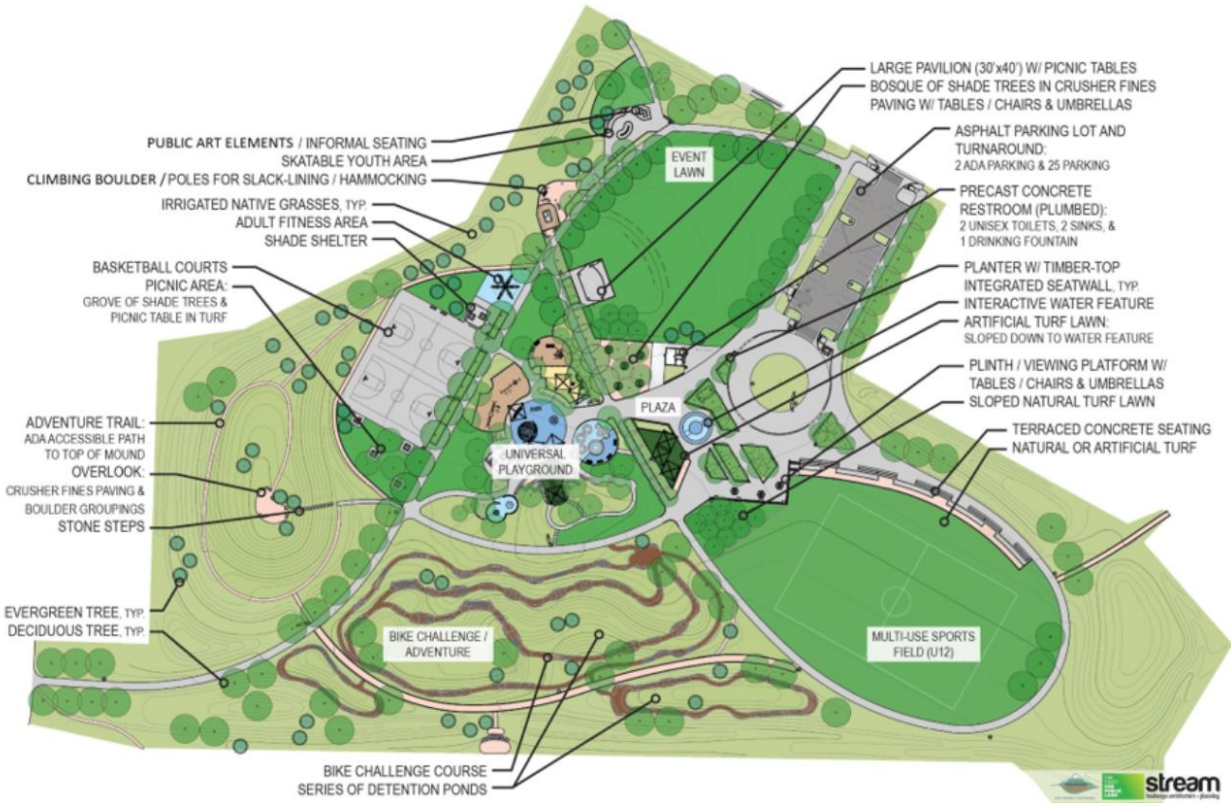
In August, City Council adopted an ordinance to appropriate \$3,700,000 to the renovation of Panorama Park. Panorama Park is a 13.5 acre neighborhood park located in Southeast Colorado Springs adjacent to Panorama Middle School. It will soon receive the largest neighborhood park renovation in city history.

The park renovation project aims to:

- Provide a safe, accessible, quality community destination park within a 10-minute walk for many Southeast residents;
- Add new features based upon community driven needs;



- Replace aging equipment;
- Utilize recognized expert partners to advance a resident-led engagement and creative process;
- Re-envision the park to address limited opportunities for play and hazardous conditions.



Panorama Park Approved Master Plan

## Banning Lewis Ranch North

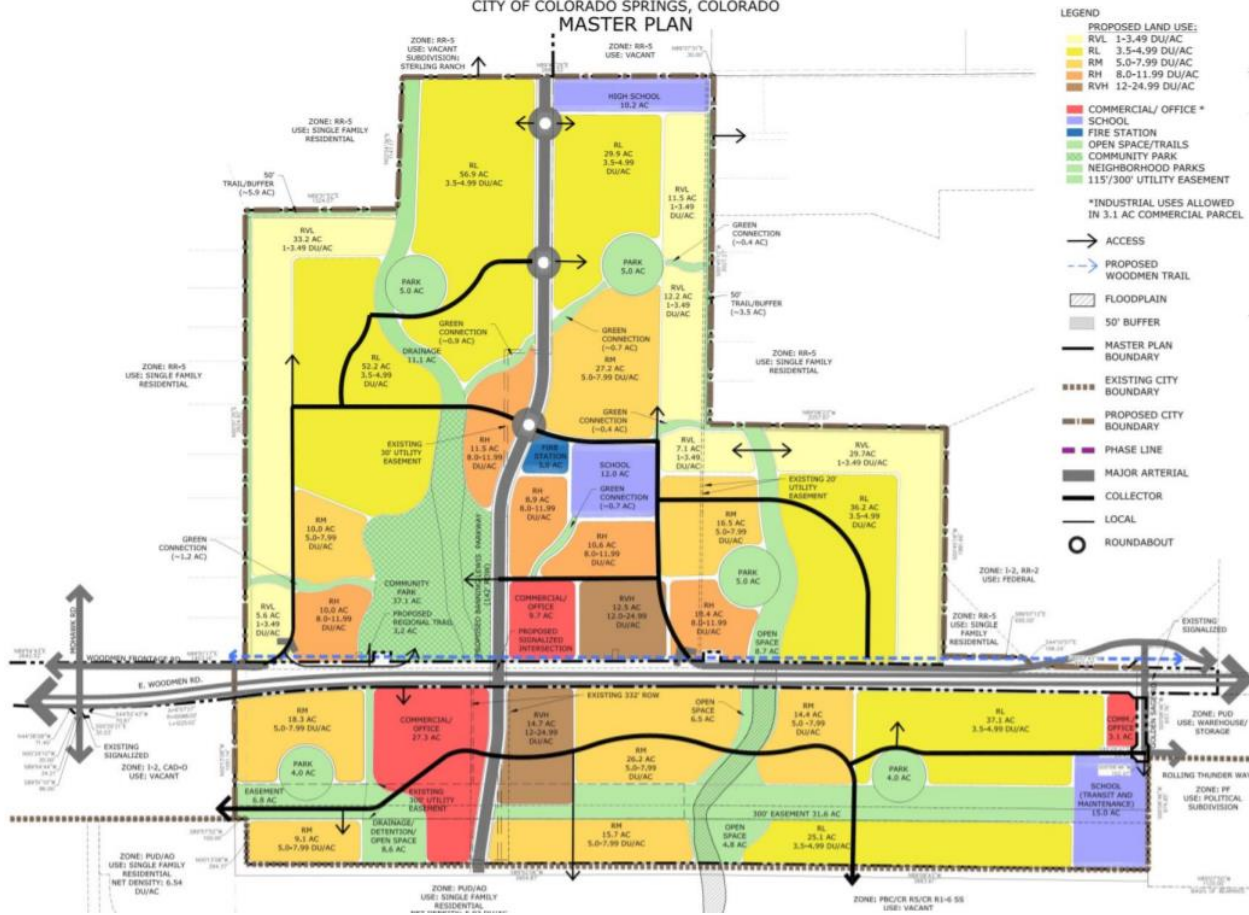
At their January 12<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting, City Council unanimously approved the annexation of 887 acres worth of land in known Northeast Colorado Springs known as Banning Lewis Ranch North. The master plan for this area includes vibrant neighborhoods, activity centers, and 60 acres of new parkland dedicated to the City.

# BANNING LEWIS RANCH NORTH

## CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

### MASTER PLAN

OVERALL TOTAL: 808



Banning Lewis Ranch North Master Plan

## CONTINUING CITY COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Strategic Plan: Safe and Resilient Communities

City Council is committed to adding more affordable housing units throughout the City as Colorado Springs continues to grow (see City Council's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan). The Mayor has a goal of 1,000 affordable units per year. City Council helps the City hit that goal through approving affordable planned unit developments (when a company invests their own money in affordable housing) or aiding construction through government funding.

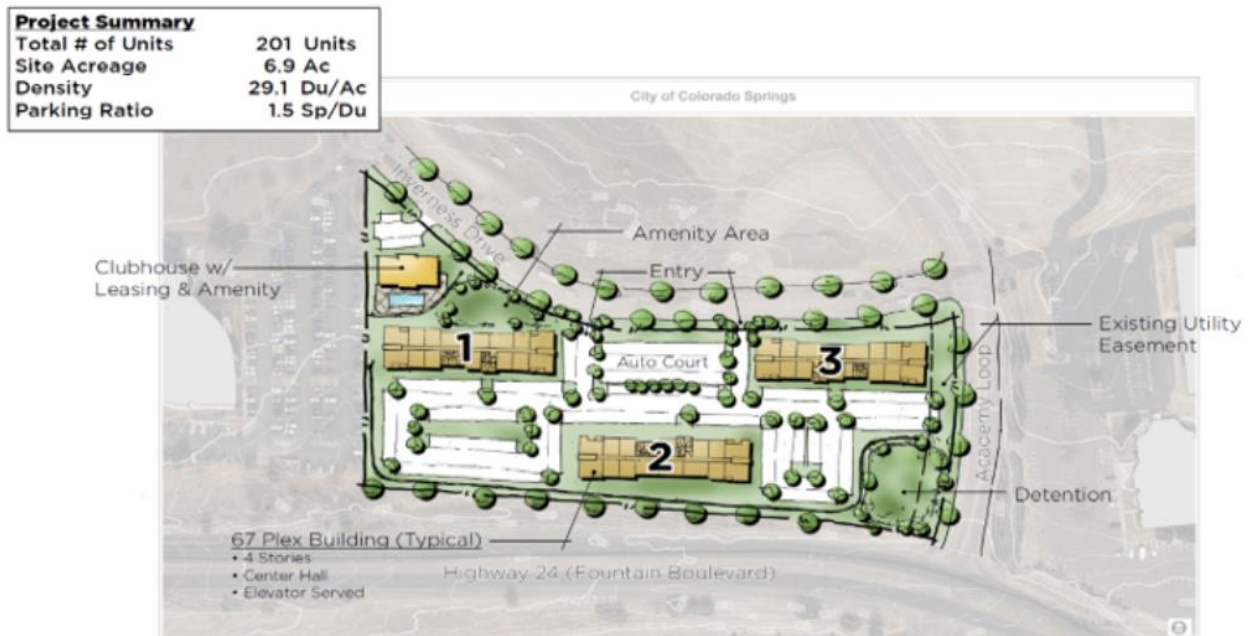
### 2021 Annual Action Plan

The Annual Action Plan (AAP) guides the use of grant funds that the Community Development Division receives for the coming program year. The plan is the result of

consulting with various stakeholders, including agencies responsible for carrying out eligible projects and activities, local government representatives, interested community members, and advocacy groups for disadvantaged populations such as the disabled, individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and low-income seniors. The AAP lays out specific strategies that the City and its partners will employ to meet the community's priority needs. City Council adopted the Annual Action Plan Resolution in their February 9<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting.

## Academy Heights

Academy Heights is a special development that perfectly aligns with the City's plan for more Affordable Housing. City Council approved this project to move forward at their March 9<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting. This development will provide 201 affordable apartment units in South Colorado Springs.



Academy Heights Design Plan

## BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES UPDATES

(PLACEHOLDER)



*Fire Chief, Randy Royal, sworn-in at February 9, 2021 City Council Meeting*



*City Auditor, Jacqueline Rowland, sworn-in at January 26, 2021 City Council Meeting*

## **DECISIONS IMPACTING THE CITY**

- April 2020 – Approves rezoning of 170 acres east of Tutt Blvd. known as the Greenways of Sand Creek Park for housing development in place of privately owned golf course.
- June 2020 – Amends Ordinances allowing for Accessory Dwelling Units.
- June 2020 – Resolution approving the acquisition of 341 acres known as the Mountain Shadows Open Space the Trails, Open Space and Parks Program.
- June-September 2020 – The Law Enforcement and Accountability Commission was created and Commissioners were selected through a rigorous application and interview process.
- August 2020 – Ordinance appropriation of \$3,700,000 to the redevelopment construction of Panorama Park.
- September-January 2020 – City Council Rules and Regulations Revision.
- November 2020 – Adopts Colorado Springs' first public art master plan.
- November 2020—2021 City Budget is passed.
- January 2021— Voted unanimously in favor of appointing Jacqueline Rowland as City Auditor and prescribing her duties, compensation and tenure in office.
- January 2021—Annexation of 887 acres of land known as Banning Lewis North into the City.
- February 2021 – Approved an ordinance granting sales tax relief to local restaurants that have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- February 2021 – Fire Chief Randy Royal sworn-in on February 9, 2021 City Council Meeting following a unanimous Council approval.
- February 2021 – Passed a six-month Moratorium on the enforcement of certain zoning code violations related to carports in front-yard setbacks.
- March 2021 – Academy Heights affordable housing complex approved.
- March 2021 – Approves the creation of the Gazette-St. Francis Improvement Districts.

## **BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES**

### **City Council Subcommittees**

- Budget
- Special District
- Strategic Plan
- Military Liaison

### **Councilmember Appointments**

#### Ex Officio

- Colorado College Student Government Association

- Colorado Municipal League Board of Directors
- Colorado Municipal League Policy Committee
- Colorado Springs Chamber & Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors
- Colorado Springs Continuum of Care
- Colorado Springs Convention & Visitors Board of Directors
- Workforce Development Board

#### City

- 2A Advisory Committee
- 2C Advisory Committee
- Audit Committee
- Downtown Development Authority

#### Regional

- El Paso County Board of Public Health
- Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District
- Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG)
- Pikes Peak Regional Building Department Regional Building Commission
- Pikes Peak Rural Transit Authority (PPRTA)

### **City Council Appointed**

#### Sales Tax/Fee Allocation

- Development Review Enterprise Customer Advisory Committee
- Lodgers, Campgrounds and Automobile Rental Tax Citizens' Advisory Committee (LART)
- Public Safety Sales Tax Oversight Committee (PSST)
- Stormwater Advisory Committee
- Trails, Open Space, and Parks Advisory Committee (TOPS)

#### Advisory

- Airport Advisory Commission
- Art Commission of the Pikes Peak Region
- Audit Committee
- Citizens Transportation Advisory Board (CTAB)
  - Active Transportation Advisory Committee
- Council District Process Advisory Committee
- Human Relations Commission (HRC)
- Initiative Review Committee
- Investment Advisory Committee

- Law Enforcement Transparency and Accountability Commission (LETAC)
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

#### Action/Appeal

- Civil Service Commission
- Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
- Downtown Review Board (DRB)
- Fire Board of Appeals (FBA)
- Historic Preservation Board
- Independent Ethics Commission
- Planning Commission

#### Special Districts

- Briargate Center Business Improvement District
- Briargate Special Improvement Maintenance District
- Colorado Avenue Gateway Special Improvement Maintenance District
- Greater Downtown Colorado Springs Business Improvement District
- Norwood Special Improvement Maintenance District
- Old Colorado City Security and Maintenance District
- Platte Avenue Special Improvement Maintenance District
- Stetson Hills Special Improvement Maintenance District
- Woodstone Special Improvement Maintenance District

#### Regional – Advisory

- Food Policy Advisory Board

#### Regional – Action

- City/County Subdivision Drainage Board
- El Paso-Teller County 911 Authority Board
- Pikes Peak Area Council of Government Community Advisory Committee
- Pikes Peak Library District Board (PPLD)
- Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD)
  - Regional Building Advisory Board
  - Regional Board of Review
  - Regional Building Department Technical Committee
  - Regional Building Department Licensing Committee



*Councilmembers Tom Strand and Andy Pico thanking Healthcare Workers at UHealth Memorial North Campus.*





*Councilmember Geisling speaking with constituents in City Hall.*

## **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

The challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic will not last forever. As the world returns to normal, City Hall will as well. City Hall has traditionally been open to public and will be again once guidelines allow. Despite the challenges, Councilmembers are still accessible to constituents and happy to speak about anything happening in their districts or across the City.

- **Become more involved in your community**

There are many opportunities for citizens to engage and become more involved in the operation and decisions affecting life around Colorado Springs. Applying for a Board, Commission, or Committee is a great way to help shape the way our City operates. For more information please visit [ColoradoSprings.gov/boards](https://coloradosprings.gov/boards).

- **In the Community**

In 2020 City Council still held public meetings outside of normal City Council Meetings. These included City Council District Town Halls, public feedback meetings about Plastic Bag Fees and Regulation of Pet Stores. Councilmembers also attended virtual meetings with constituents, local media, and many organizations throughout the region.

- **Other Duties as assigned**

In addition to serving on City Council, the Councilmembers serve as the Colorado Springs Utilities Board. Councilmembers also serve as liaisons to the City's numerous Boards, Commissions, and Committees. In addition to these City specific roles, City Council has representation on regional boards including the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG), Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA), and the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD) Regional Building Commission.

- **First Amendment Rights**

City Hall also serves as a gathering space for protests or other events where people congregate to recognize a certain topic. City Council meetings are open to the public, and the Citizen Discussion portion of Regular City Council Meetings allows the public to speak about any topic not on that day's Agenda.

- **Request a Councilmember**

As local restrictions lift and City Hall reopens Councilmembers would love to take time to speak with students taking tours of City Hall and to visit schools throughout Colorado Springs to teach students about local government. If you would like a tour of City Hall or want a Councilmember to speak at a school or community event, please reach out to Alex Ryden, City Council Communications Specialist, at 719-385-5247 or alex.ryden@coloradosprings.gov.

- **(Side note) Tour City Hall**

Want to know more about one of the City's most historic buildings? Reach out to City Council Staff and we will be happy to take groups or individuals on a tour!

## **BY THE NUMBERS**

Ordinances: 106 Passed by City Council and signed by Mayor Suthers (As of March 9<sup>th</sup>, PLACEHOLDER)

Resolutions: 152 adopted by City Council (As of March 9<sup>th</sup>, PLACEHOLDER)

Proclamations: 32

Board Appointments: 119

Constituent Responses: 2,911

Town Halls: 3

## UTILITIES BOARD

(PLACEHOLDER)







Councilmembers join constituent protesters outside City Hall during the summer's Black Lives Matters Protests.