

Colorado Springs City Council Report to the Citizens



YEAR IN REVIEW

All six City Council District seats were up for grabs in the April 2017 election. Three incumbents kept their seats, while three new members joined City Council. Together all nine members of Council have worked thousands of hours in 2017 to pass hundreds of ordinances and resolutions, create a new Commission on Aging, answer the need for affordable housing, and work in collaboration with Mayor John Suthers to finalize a 2018 City Budget that will address some of the City's biggest needs.

Councilmembers are honored to serve their fellow citizens and look forward to another productive year.

NEW (AND FAMILIAR) FACES ON COUNCIL

On April 18, 2017, three Councilmembers were sworn in for a second term; Don Knight (District 1), Jill Gaebler (District 5), and Andy Pico (District 6). Three new members were also sworn in; David Geislinger (District 2), Richard Skorman (District 3), and Yolanda Avila (District 4). Geislinger has a background in law as an attorney in Southern Colorado, and is an ordained Catholic Deacon. Skorman is a local business owner and is back on City Council after serving two terms from 1999-2007. Avila is making history of her own; she is the first visually-impaired councilmember to be elected in Colorado Springs. A bonus member of City Council staff is Avila's guide dog Puma. The Golden Retriever attends every Council meeting. (Video of the swearing-in ceremony: <https://vimeo.com/213907915>)



(Caption: Six City Council Members are sworn-in at the Pioneers Museum in Downtown Colorado Springs on April 18, 2017)

IMPROVING COLORADO SPRINGS

City employees across all departments work tirelessly with community stakeholders to provide City Council with accurate and complete information to help them make the best decisions for Colorado Springs. In 2017, those decisions led to Council's adoption of hundreds of ordinances and resolutions on various topics, all drafted to improve the City of Colorado Springs.

- **ORDINANCES:** 114 passed by City Council and signed by Mayor Suthers
- **RESOLUTIONS:** 163 passed by City Council

ANSWERING THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEED

This year, like every year, City Council has worked with the City's Planning and Community Development Department and the City Planning Commission to decide a wide variety of land use matters. Adding more affordable housing in the City is something all nine Councilmembers agree is a priority, and Council is working closely with City staff and community stakeholders to explore all opportunities to promote the development of more affordable units through City code changes, incentives and public-private partnerships. The City's Community Development Division tracks affordable multi-family construction in Colorado Springs, and expects more than 800 new or renovated units will be ready to go by the end of 2018. By many estimates, Colorado Springs' rapidly expanding economy will require up to 30,000 more affordable housing units over the next decade.

HELP FOR CITY COUNCIL THROUGH BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

There are over 50 different boards, commissions and committees serving at City Council's request, covering matters as diverse as transportation, food policy, land use, public safety, and tourism. Members are all volunteers, and often commit significant time and effort in the work of their board. The newest of this group is the City's Commission on Aging, which was created by an ordinance adopted by Council in April of 2017; the commission began meeting in September 2017. The Commission on Aging saw a record amount of applicants, with 56 people applying to fill 11 seats. The Commission on Aging is charged with making recommendations to the City's PlanCOS comprehensive plan process relating to maintaining an age-friendly City designed for residents of all ages to enjoy.

Boards, commissions and committees have City staff liaisons who help with meeting logistics such as setting meeting times, collecting meeting minutes and creating meeting agendas. Councilmembers also serve on different boards, commissions and committees; in conjunction with staff liaisons, this helps all Councilmembers to stay informed on issues affecting the City in a wide variety of ways.

As part of the City's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, City staff have coordinated outreach events with board volunteers and training seminars for staff liaisons, all designed to help keep the dozens of boards, commissions and committees on track for City success. In addition, the City Council Civic Engagement Program, coordinated since 2014 in partnership with the Community Partnership Project, has enhanced outreach

for boards & commissions volunteers and provided dozens of interested community members with guidance and exposure to board volunteer work, resulting in several appointments to Council's boards & commissions.

(In development: graph to show the structure of boards, commissions and committees under City Council)

DEVELOPING NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP

At the same time City Council taps into our community's current leadership capacity to staff its advisory boards and commissions, it also focuses on developing the next generation of City leadership. In November 2017, City Council heard its regular update from the City's Ticket to Success program, which provides a unique opportunity for local 7th & 8th grade students to visit City government department, meeting with City leaders and gaining awareness of City careers and issues. In addition, City Council supports Leadership Pikes Peak's Leading Edge summer program, designed to provide high school juniors and seniors with leadership skills, an appreciation for civic engagement, and with the knowledge and connections to empower them to get involved and make a difference in their community.

BUDGET

City Council and Mayor Suthers all expressed gratitude for the efforts that led to the successful adoption of the 2018 City budget, culminating a months-long process that was finalized at the Council's last meeting of the year on December 12, 2017. After multiple work sessions and public meetings where citizens made comments, the 2018 appropriations ordinance was passed unanimously on first reading on November 28, 2017. In an unprecedented move, the budget was placed on the Consent Calendar for its second reading on December 12, the final meeting of the year, where it was approved.

CITY COUNCIL'S SPECIAL MARIJUANA WORKING GROUP

Council's working group relating to local marijuana policy continued to meet in 2017, reviewing matters as diverse as zoning requirements for marijuana cultivation operations, state and federal legislation and its impact on local regulation of marijuana, and medical marijuana dispensary hours of operation. The members of the working group, representing diverse perspectives and representing neighborhoods, patients & caregivers, and marijuana industry perspectives, have engaged in robust debate and have engaged diverse community stakeholders in order to inform Council's decisions in this important policy area.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENTS

Councilmembers worked with downtown stakeholders and City staff to adopt an ordinance in August 2017 that will enable the City to take advantage of a new

provision of state law that allows the formation of “entertainment districts” within the City. By forming such a district, business owners can allow patrons who order alcoholic beverages to come and go between venues included in the resulting “common consumption area.” This allows for greater flexibility in planning festivals and, in particular, events in the downtown core.

In addition, in June 2017, City Council adopted a mobile food vendor license, which gives business owners permission to use metered parking spaces to park mobile food trucks during special events, further enhancing our City’s vibrant downtown scene.

CABLE VISION

In July 2017, City Council adopted an extension of Comcast’s long-standing cable franchise within the City of Colorado Springs. City staff spent more than a year negotiating the franchise renewal, working closely with Councilmembers to establish the terms of the agreement. Under the renewed 10-year agreement, Comcast agreed to compensate the City of Colorado Springs for the use of its rights-of-way by funding various public access and telecommunications programs and projects benefiting the citizens, to the tune of \$3 million in the first year, increasing to \$4.5 million in year three of the agreement.

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

City Council heard a number of positive updates from health care systems and providers in our community during the year. In May, the Pikes Peak Continuum of Care briefed Council on issues facing our homeless neighbors, and in December, City Council approved an ordinance appropriating over \$1.2 million to the Memorial Health System Enterprise Fund to transfer to the Colorado Springs Health Foundation for grants benefiting the health of communities in our region. As of the end of 2017, Council anticipated receiving updates from representatives of TRICARE, University of Colorado Health, Children’s Hospital, and the Community Health Partnership on various health-related issues of interest to their constituents.




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