

The Year of Civic Engagement

**REPORT TO
THE CITIZENS**



**APRIL 1, 2024 TO
MARCH 31, 2025**

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Introduction YEAR IN REVIEW

2024 was a year of growth and civic engagement in Colorado Springs. The City Council heard from more citizens than we ever have about many different topics that ranged from land use items, social concerns, issues in their neighborhoods, and many other topics. The seats on City Council remained unchanged this year as your City Councilmembers gained more experience and began diving deeper into the issues that our constituents told them were important in their lives. Councilmembers this year adjusted to working through differences to consider many proposals such as an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Enterprise, large annexations south and east of Colorado Springs, and working through recreational marijuana considerations in the City. Citizen concerns this year included closing a local library, amphitheater noise complaints, and many land use considerations. This coming year, City Council looks forward to continuing to engage our residents and welcoming our new District Councilmembers.

The Colorado Springs City Council in 2024
From left: Lynette Crow-Iverson, Nancy Henjum, Dave Donelson, Yolanda Avila, David Leinweber, Michelle Talarico, Mike O'Malley, Brian Risley, Randy Helms



FAREWELL

TO OUR OUTGOING COUNCILMEMBERS



Yolanda Avila

Representing Southeast Colorado Springs' District 4, Yolanda Avila began her tenure on City Council in 2017. She has been a strong advocate for her constituents in District 4 while also being a voice for accessibility in all of Colorado Springs. Yolanda spent many days and nights in City Hall working to make Colorado Springs a better place by promoting quality of life, police transparency, rights for citizens with disabilities, and budget responsibility. During her time on City Council, Yolanda served on numerous Boards and Commissions including as the Vice Chair of the Colorado Springs Utilities Board and City Council Liaison for the Law Enforcement Transparency and Accountability Commission (LETAC), Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG), Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA), and the Health Foundation. We thank Yolanda and her trusty service dog, Puma, for their dedicated eight years on City Council!

Randy Helms

Retired United States Air Force Colonel, Randy Helms, was elected to the City Council in 2021, representing the City's north side in District 2. During his four years on City Council, Randy served as both the President Pro Tem and Council President. President Helms presided over City Council meetings with integrity and compassion, as he was always happy to welcome constituents to speak to the Council about all their concerns. While on City Council, there were numerous and sometimes contentious proposals throughout his District that Randy was always willing to face with his constituents and the City as a whole in mind. Your leadership and honor will always be appreciated by the City of Colorado Springs. Thank you and enjoy your retirement, Randy!



Mike O'Malley

Councilmember Mike O'Malley joined the City Council in January of 2021 after being appointed to an unexpired term for Colorado Springs District 6. Following winning election to a four-year term, Mike made clear his priorities on City Council were to fix Marksheffel Road and support the City's Administration.

Mike O'Malley has always been a staunch supporter of local military and served on the Military Affairs Council. Councilmember O'Malley served as the Vice Chair for the Colorado Springs Utilities Board and served on the Colorado Springs Sports Authority during his time with the City Council.

Michelle Talarico

Michelle Talarico was elected to a two-year term on City Council in District 3, representing the City's Southwest side. Councilmember Talarico was encouraged to run for City Council by her friend, Stephannie Fortune, the late, former District 3 Councilmember. During her time on Council, Michelle advocated for the residents of District 3 and was considerate of decisions for the proposals presented to City Council. Michelle served on the Civil Service Commission, Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Board, and Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) while on the City Council. Thank you for your time on City Council, Michelle!



City BUDGET

2025 GENERAL FUND HIGHLIGHTS



Council President Randy Helms along with Mayor Yemi Mobolade and Councilmember Nancy Henjum present the 2025 City Budget on the steps of City Hall.

- » **Increased funding of \$250,000** for capital
- » **The addition of 20 Police Officers** to grow authorized strength and keep pace with the City's growth.
- » **The addition of three Police Department civilian positions** in the areas of photo enforcement, training academy support, and the body-worn camera program.
- » **Continued funding for replacement of Police Department emergency vehicles** and Fire Department apparatus.
- » **Continued funding for the Homeless Outreach Program (HOP)** in the Fire Department; this program provides resources and navigation for access to healthcare, housing, and mental and behavioral health resources.

- » **Continued funding for the Police Department's Homeless Outreach Team (HOT).**
- » **Compensation increases of 2% for all Police and Fire sworn employees** and an average of 2% pay for performance increase for civilian employees.
- » **An additional Quality of Life Team in Neighborhood Services Division**, added by reallocating vacant positions and associated funding from other areas of the organization.
- » **A maintenance technician in Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services** to address neighborhood parks, including the new Grey Hawk Park.
- » **Transfer four vacant positions to Housing and Homeless Response Department**, replacing positions that were previously grant funded.
- » **Continued funding of \$500,000** for shelter bed operations for people experiencing homelessness.
- » **Transfer the Neighborhood Services Division to Public Works Operations and Maintenance**, to increase efficiencies of equipment use and work assignment.

17 TOWN HALLS & COMMUNITY MEETINGS

68 ORDINANCES PASSED

1,670 CONSTITUENT RESPONSES

188 RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED

61 VOLUNTEERS APPOINTED TO BOARDS

8 TOURS OF CITY HALL

520 PUBLIC COMMENTS

By the NUMBERS



Mayor Yemi Mobolade addressing City Council and Colorado Springs citizens during his 2024 State of the City Address in City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Councilmembers Kevin Walker and Rich Mully being appointed to City Council.

Council President Pro Tem Lynette Crow-Iverson with Councilmembers Mike O'Malley and David Leinweber meet with future U.S. Congressman, Jeff Crank, in Washington, DC in September of 2024.





Councilmember Nancy Henjum hosts a Community Conversation at the Citadel Mall regarding public safety and concerns of District 5 residents.

A Year of Engaging with the COMMUNITY

From April 1, 2024 until March 31, 2025, the City Council engaged with more constituents than ever before. The past couple of years, Legislative Services Staff have been compiling data on how many people reach out to Council and what topics are on their minds. In the 2023 Annual Report timeframe (April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024), City Council heard from 1,670 constituents. For the current Annual Report window, City Council has more than doubled that number to XXX. More people are also speaking during public comment at City Council meetings with approximately 26 hours in 2023 and XX hours in 2024! These numbers reflect more Colorado Springs residents getting involved in the happenings of their city with a variety of topics on their mind, including the Noise Hardship permit at the Ford Amphitheater and the Pikes Peak Library Board's decision to close the Rockrimmon Library. They also are speaking to City Council about topics that are directly influenced by City Council's decisions such as various land use topics and reaffirming Colorado Springs as a Non-Sanctuary City.

City Council is also being more active in Colorado Springs neighborhoods with Councilmembers heavily involved in the 1,000 Neighborhood Gatherings initiative. This idea was brought by City Council to the Mayor and his administration in an effort to promote our City's mental health and build upon the relationships of our friends and neighbors. Look for more chances to engage in a neighborhood gathering in your community coming in 2025!



Councilmembers David Leinweber and Michelle Talarico join Mayor Yemi Mobolade and First Lady Abbey Mobolade in Kicking Off the 1,000 Neighborhood Gatherings Initiative in the summer of 2024.

PRESENTATIONS

- » **Cultural Affairs Office of the Pikes Peak Region (COPPeR)** 2023 year-end Lodgers and Auto Rental Tax (LART) contract update to City Council 4/8/24
- » **Colorado Springs Sports Corp** 2023 year-end Lodgers and Auto Rental Tax (LART) contract update to City Council 4/8/24
- » **Visit COS** - 2023 year-end Lodgers and Auto Rental Tax (LART) contract update to City Council 4/22/24
- » **Colorado Springs Chamber and EDC** 2023 year-end Lodgers and Auto Rental Tax (LART) contract update to City Council 4/22/24
- » **Colorado Youth Outdoors Update** 6/10/24
- » **City Financial Report Q1 2024** 6/10/24
- » **University of Colorado** Colorado Springs Hometown Education Resources and Opportunity's Empowering Servicemembers Scholarship 6/24/24
- » **Overview of City Council's Office of the City Auditor** 7/8/24
- » **Common Sense Institute Colorado Springs Housing Affordability Report** 7/22/24
- » **Colorado Springs Sports Corp** 2024 mid-year Lodgers and Auto Rental Tax (LART) contract update to City Council 7/22/24
- » **Wildfire Mitigation Update from Colorado Springs Fire Department** 7/22/24
- » **Colorado Springs Chamber and EDC** 2024 mid-year Lodgers and Auto Rental Tax (LART) contract update to City Council 8/12/24
- » **COS Creek Plan Update** 8/12/24
- » **Creating a Family Friendly City** Early Childhood Business Council 8/12/24
- » **Pikes Peak Honor Bell** 8/12/24
- » **Visit COS** 2024 mid-year Lodgers and Auto Rental Tax (LART) contract update to City Council 8/26/24
- » **Careers in Construction** Colorado Update 8/26/24
- » **Mayor's 2024 State of the City Address** 9/9/24
- » **Cultural Affairs Office of the Pikes Peak Region (COPPeR)** 2024 mid-year Lodgers and Auto Rental Tax (LART) contract update to City Council 9/9/24
- » **Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Urban Renewal Area in Colorado Springs** 9/23/24
- » **Lithium-Ion Battery Presentation** 9/23/24
- » **Presentation of Recommendations from the Law Enforcement Transparency and Advisory Commission (LETAC)** 10/21/24
- » **Downtown Development Authority Annual Report** 10/21/24
- » **UCHealth and Children's Hospital Colorado Annual Update** 11/12/24
- » **Pikes Peak Library District Board of Trustees Informational Brief** 11/25/24
- » **Information Regarding Natural Medicine** 11/25/24
- » **Update from Keep Colorado Springs Beautiful** 11/25/24
- » **Pikes Peak Business & Education Alliance** 12/9/24
- » **2024 City of Colorado Springs Community Satisfaction Survey Findings** 12/9/24
- » **Update from Rocky Mountain PACE** 1/27/25
- » **Update from Exponential Impact** 2/10/25
- » **Pikes Peak Regional Building Department Annual Report** 2/10/25
- » **Update on El Paso County Jail** 2/24/25

LAND USE & NOTABLE RESOLUTIONS

AMARA DENIAL AND KARMAN LINE ANNEXATIONS

This year, the City Council held two public hearings on potential annexations of great interest to the community. The first annexation petition was for property located southeast of the current city boundaries, and the project was named Amara. The petition proposed annexing 3,200 acres to create up to 9,500 homes, along with retail space, schools, parks, and other amenities.

The second annexation petition considered by the City Council was for property located east of the current city boundaries, and the project was named Karmen Line. This petition proposed annexing 1,900 acres to develop up to 6,500 new homes.

Both proposals received significant community feedback. Between the two proposals, the City Council devoted over 17 hours of public hearing time to reviewing and considering these petitions. Legislative Services staff worked proactively with stakeholder groups for each hearing to ensure accurate information about the City Council's processes and procedures was disseminated to all interested residents.

The City Council denied the Amara annexation petition with a 5-4 vote. The Council later approved the Karmen Line annexation petition with a 7-2 vote.

SOUTHERN RAILYARD ANNEXATION

In March 2025, the City Council was presented a petition to annex 3,100 south of Colorado Springs near Fort Carson and Ray Nixon Power Plant for the Southern Colorado Rail Park. The project projected 5,600,000 square feet of new buildings and over 7,700 new jobs created as a new hub for manufacturing. They also stated this would be a great benefit to Fort Carson and make it more resilient.

The annexation was approved on a vote of 9-0.

REAFFIRMATION OF COLORADO SPRINGS AS A NON-SANCTUARY CITY

On February 13, 2024, City Council passed a resolution titled Protecting the Security and Quality of Life of the Citizens of Colorado Springs. City Council affirmed to being a Non-Sanctuary City and asserted it would not spend taxpayer dollars on services related to the immigration crisis.

On September 24, 2024, City Council passed another resolution titled Reaffirming the City of Colorado Springs will Remain a Non-Sanctuary City. City Council wanted citizens to know just like any emergency, they would be ready to react with an operational plan that prioritizes the

safety, quality of life, and interests of Colorado Springs citizens.

The City Council approved the resolution with a 7-2 vote.

Still waiting on the following for this page:

- **ADUs (Likely coming in March)**
- **Southern Railroad Annexation (Maybe March)**
- **AnnexCOS (Possibly coming in March)**

Legislative DECISIONS

AND BALLOT ITEMS

Councilmember Yolanda Avila gives an interview to a news reporter regarding the decision to not start an enterprise for Emergency Medical Services.

May 2024

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) ENTERPRISE PROPOSAL

In June 2024, City Council considered a request to establish a new municipal enterprise for emergency medical services from Mayor Mobolade and the Colorado Springs Fire Department. The proposed purpose of the new enterprise was to provide transport services and other associated and integrated emergency medical functions. The City currently uses a third party contractor, American Medical Response (AMR), for these services.

After hours of deliberation and thoughtful consideration, City Council denied the proposed creation on the municipal enterprise by a 5-4 opting to stay with the current provider, AMR.

2C & 2D REFERRAL TO THE BALLOT

Ballot Item 2C: Road Improvement Sales Tax Extension

City Council unanimously approved a resolution to submit Ballot Item 2C to voters in the November 2024 general election. This item proposed extending the existing 0.57% temporary sales and use tax, which funds road repairs and improvements in Colorado Springs, for an additional 10 years (from 2026 through the end of 2035). The tax is equivalent to 5.7 cents per \$10 purchase and was set to expire on December 31, 2025.

Election results:
Yes: 173,919 votes No: 62,465 votes
The measure passed with over 75% voter approval.

Ballot Item 2D: Prohibition of Retail Marijuana Establishments

City Council referred Ballot Item 2D to the November 2024 election through an ordinance proposing an amendment to the City Charter. This amendment proposed to prohibit retail marijuana establishments from operating within the city limits of Colorado Springs. The City Council approved the referral ordinance on the final reading with a 7-2 vote.

Election results:
Yes: 118,975 votes No: 121,714 votes
The measure was narrowly defeated with 50.5% of voters opposing the proposal.

Nov 2024 BALLOT ISSUE 300: RETAIL/ RECREATIONAL SALE OF MARIJUANA WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS OF COLORADO SPRINGS

In the November 2024 general election, Colorado Springs voters approved Issue 300, a citizen-initiated ballot measure allowing existing medical marijuana dispensaries to apply for licenses to sell recreational marijuana within city limits. The number of recreational retail licenses is capped at the number of medical marijuana licenses in effect on November 5th,

City Council at the dais listening to public comments in December of 2024.



2024, limiting the potential number of establishments. Recreational marijuana sales will generate new tax revenue for Colorado Springs, supporting various public services, including public safety, mental health initiatives, and veterans' programs through a special 5% sales tax.

The measure also codifies key regulations and penalties for recreational marijuana sales, which cannot be changed without voter approval. These include prohibiting recreational marijuana businesses from operating within 1,000 feet of public or private daycares, preschools, or K-12 schools; banning sales or transfers to individuals under 21; and forbidding possession of recreational marijuana on school and childcare facility premises.

Yes: 130,677 No: 108,305
Issue 300 passed with 54.6% of the vote.

Jan 2025

CITY COUNCIL ACTION ON BALLOT QUESTION 300

Following the voter approved passage of Ballot Question 300, the Colorado Springs City Council, in January 2025, voted 7-2 to place a repeal measure on the April 1, 2025, municipal ballot. The City Council expressed concerns about potential voter confusion during the 2024 November general election. However, legal challenges arose, with opponents arguing the repeal may not align with the Colorado Constitution, which requires local measures prohibiting recreational marijuana businesses to be decided during a general election in an even-numbered year. On February 10, 2025, an El Paso County District Court judge issued a ruling, finding the repeal effort unconstitutional.

NATURAL MEDICINE/ RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA LAND USE ORDINANCES

With the passage of Proposition 122, legalizing the use of natural medicine, and the passage of citizen-initiated Issue 300, related to the legalization of recreational

marijuana, City Council passed land use ordinances for the purpose of regulation.

On September 24, 2024, City Council passed an ordinance to regulate the distancing requirements for recreational marijuana stores. The ordinance required that they be one mile from elementary or secondary schools, residential childcare facilities, or drug or alcohol treatment facilities. On January 28, 2025, City Council passed a subsequent ordinance that reduced the distance from one mile to 1,000 feet to be in compliance with Issue 300 after it passed in the November 2024 election.

On December 10, 2024, City Council adopted regulations that allow natural medicine uses in City limits. Among other requirements, the healing centers shall be located at least one mile from any elementary or secondary schools, residential childcare facilities, drug or alcohol treatment facilities, or any other natural medicine healing centers.

SIT-LIE ORDINANCE EXPANSION

At the January 14, 2025, Regular Meeting, the Colorado Springs City Council expanded the Sit-Lie Ordinance, which bans sitting or lying in public rights-of-way, such as sidewalks and storefront areas. The previous iterations of the Ordinance included Downtown, Colorado College, and the west side of South Nevada Avenue. The enforcement zone now extends south from I-25 to Cheyenne Boulevard and east from South Nevada Avenue to South Wahsatch Avenue. Enforcement runs daily from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., with extended hours on Friday and Saturday nights until 3:00 a.m.

Supporters, including local business owners, believe the expansion improves public safety and business accessibility. Opponents, however, argue that it criminalizes homelessness and adds to challenges for the unhoused. Some Councilmembers opposed the measure, calling for more mental health services. The City Council approved the ordinance change on a 7-2 vote.



In the COMMUNITY



Councilmembers Nancy Henjum and Mike O'Malley enjoy the music at the grand opening of the Ford Amphitheater in August of 2024.



Council President Randy Helms speaks to the media and public during the Groundbreaking for the Airport Road Reconstruction Project



Councilmembers David Leinweber, Yolanda Avila, Nancy Henjum, and Mayor Yemi Mobolade enjoy the beautiful weather for Bike to Work Day in June of 2024.



Councilmember Mike O'Malley hosts a townhall in District 6 regarding public safety at a neighborhood park in July of 2024.

June 2024 **RED ROCKS OPEN SPACE EXTENSION ACQUISITION**

On June 25, 2024, City Council unanimously approved a Resolution authorizing the acquisition of 2.54 acres in the Red Rock Canyon Open Space through the Trails, Open Space and Parks (TOPS) Program. The purchase preserved this property within the TOPS Program and protected the property from future private development. The property was identified in the 2014 Park System Master Plan as future open space.

Class 1 e-bikes provide pedal-assisted support, activating only when the rider is pedaling, and stopping the assistance once speeds exceed 20 miles per hour. This technology expands trail accessibility, making cycling more inclusive for individuals who may benefit from additional support.

Public input on the ordinance reflected both enthusiasm and concerns. Many residents welcomed the increased inclusivity, while some raised questions about e-bike use on Trails, Open Space, and Parks (TOPS)-funded properties, where motorized vehicles are typically prohibited. These considerations will remain part of ongoing discussions as the ordinance takes effect in July 2025.

Feb 2024 **EXPANDING TRAIL ACCESSIBILITY WITH E-BIKE INTEGRATION**

On February 25th, 2025, the City Council approved an ordinance, on a 5-3 vote, allowing Class 1 electric-assisted bicycles (e-bikes) on all city trails where traditional bicycles are permitted. This ordinance broadens access to the City's extensive trail network.



Council President Randy Helms with Councilman Dave Donelson and County Commissioners participate in a Stick Horse Race during the Western Street Breakfast in Downtown Colorado Springs.



Council President Randy Helms with Mayor Yemi and Councilmembers Yolanda Avila, David Leinweber, Nancy Henjum, and Mike O'Malley sign the Heart and Cancer Trust for the Colorado Springs Fire Department.



Council President Randy Helms with Mayor Yemi and Councilmembers Mike O'Malley, David Leinweber, and Fire Chief Randy Royal participate in the Groundbreaking Ceremony for Colorado Springs Fire Department Station 24 on Interquest Parkway.



Council President Randy Helms with Mayor Yemi and Councilmembers Yolanda Avila, David Leinweber, and Nancy Henjum at the 2024 Veterans Day Parade in Downtown Colorado Springs.



Councilmember Yolanda Avila with Mayor Yemi at the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the newly finished Circle Bridges Reconstruction Project in District 4.



BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES

OVERVIEW AND UPDATES

City Council Boards, Commissions, and Committees play a vital role in shaping local policies and initiatives that impact our community. These volunteer-led groups provide valuable expertise and recommendations to City Council, helping to guide important decisions for our city.

We encourage you to stay engaged by attending meetings, providing public input, and considering a leadership role within one of our Boards, Commissions, or Committees. If you are passionate about making a difference in our community, we invite you to apply for an open position and contribute your skills and perspectives.

To stay informed about opportunities to serve and important updates, subscribe to our email list through the Stay Engaged button on [ColoradoSprings.gov/boards](https://coloradosprings.gov/boards).

Get involved and help shape the future of Colorado Springs!

July 2024 **DISSOLVED THE SUSTAINABILITY BOARD**

City Council evaluated the Sustainability Advisory Board to assess its efficiency and legislative purpose. After stakeholder discussions with Councilmember Liaisons Nancy Henjum and David Leinweber, and City Administration, it was determined sustainability initiatives are best managed administratively rather than legislatively. As a result, the Board was dissolved with the adoption of Ordinance No. 24-46 on July 23, 2024, and it is anticipated its functions will transition to a Mayoral Committee.

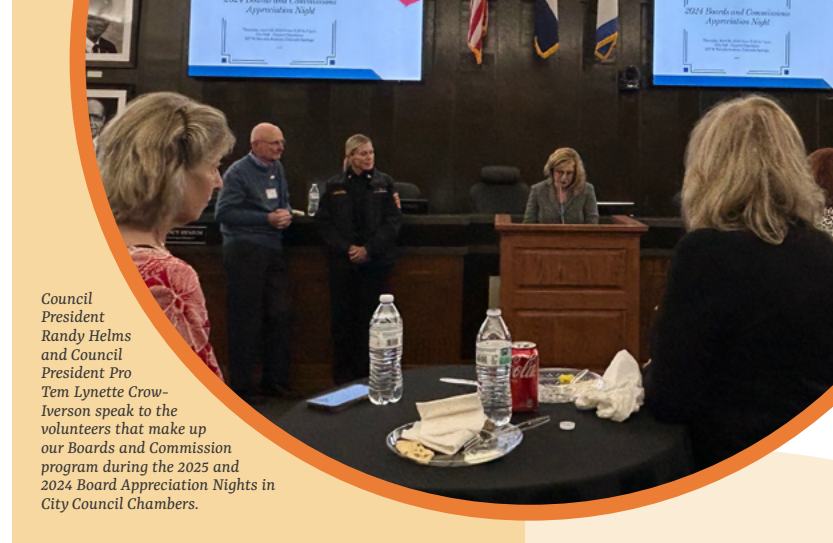
Oct 2024 **PRESENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE LAW ENFORCEMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ADVISORY COMMISSION (LETAC)**

Law Enforcement Transparency and Advisory Commission (LETAC) presented recommendations to City Council following a review of Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) policies and practices. Recommendations included policy reforms, enhanced officer training in de-escalation and cultural competency, increased community engagement, and improved transparency measures such as body-worn cameras and public data reporting. LETAC continues to evolve, with members noting improvements in its effectiveness and focus.

May 2024 **LODGERS AND AUTOMOBILE RENTAL TAX (LART) CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE EFFORT**

In May 2024, in collaboration with the Administration, City Council participated in the LART Solutions Team. The 25-member group included two Councilmembers, two members of Legislative Services, three City Administration Staff, and 18 external stakeholders. Six of the stakeholders were members of the City Council Appointed LART Citizens' Advisory Committee. To guide the discussion, the City engaged an external tourism consultant.

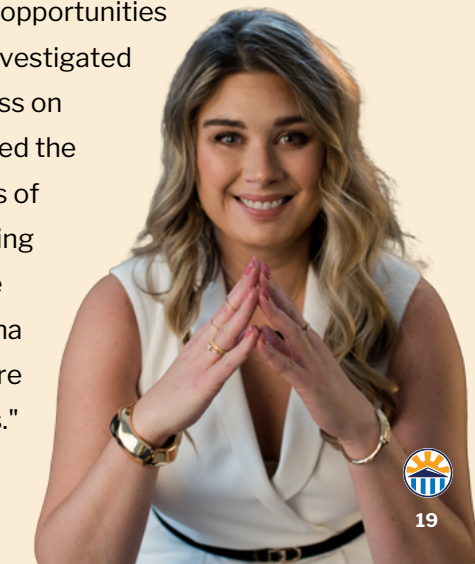
Over the summer the Solutions Team explored how to use LART revenues effectively and efficiently along with whether to increase the City's LART tax and how that would occur. City Council will continue to review and suggest modifications to the LART program in 2025.



Council President Randy Helms and Council President Pro Tem Lynette Crow-Iverson speak to the volunteers that make up our Boards and Commission program during the 2025 and 2024 Board Appreciation Nights in City Council Chambers.

RACHAEL FLICK, LETAC CHAIR

"LETAC was commissioned to serve as a conduit between city stakeholders, CSPD and Council. In 2024 we reviewed and evaluated ordinances around public protest and free speech. LETAC make recommendations to improve ease of access to the public and increase safety for both law enforcement and protestors. We reviewed survey results of officers within CSPD and recommended increased opportunities for training. LETAC also investigated the impact of homelessness on related crime. We evaluated the budget and staffing levels of law enforcement regarding their ability to serve the community in this arena and prepare for future recommendations."



Colorado Springs UTILITIES BOARD

UTILITIES BOARD CHAIR: DAVE DONELSON
UTILITIES BOARD VICE CHAIR: YOLANDA AVILA

City Council also has the responsibility to act as the governing body for Colorado Springs Utilities (Springs Utilities), which provides electric, natural gas, water and wastewater services to its customers. The Utilities Board, along with the CEO, are responsible for ensuring the benefits of local ownership and control to Colorado Springs citizens. It also has a responsibility to current and future customers by balancing reliability, rates, and relationships. The Utilities Board typically meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. in the Blue River Board Room on the fifth floor of the South Tower in the Plaza of the Rockies located at 121 S. Tejon Street.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In 2024, Springs Utilities' Economic Development team executed contracts to leverage commercial customer savings and accelerate business growth in the community.

Throughout the year, Springs Utilities was involved with 163 business retention and expansion meetings. Springs Utilities partnered with Exponential Impact, Apartment Association of Colorado Springs, Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center, Downtown Partnership, and numerous other entities.

Springs Utilities worked closely with the Colorado Springs Chamber and EDC, El Paso County, and the City to provide utility assessments and solutions for 42 potential new businesses interested in locating in Colorado Springs.

GRANT AWARDED FOR NATURAL GAS LINE IMPROVEMENTS

In 2024, the United States Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) awarded Springs Utilities \$10.4 million in Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization grants.

The grant funds will contribute to the replacement of hundreds of miles of individual bare steel service lines, many of which are in older neighborhoods. This infrastructure grant program helps modernize older, higher-risk, leaky pipes – improving safety, reducing environmental impacts, and saving consumers money on their energy bills.

Approximately 8,000 bare steel service lines remain on Colorado Springs Utilities' natural gas distribution system.

The grant investment is part of our larger commitment to



Utilities Board Chair Dave Donelson and Springs Utilities CEO Travas Deal accept a \$5.2 million grant award for critical natural gas line upgrades.

maintain and upgrade its overall natural gas distribution system.

Springs Utilities was among 65 communities and organizations to receive grant funds through the program.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ARKANSAS RIVER WATER PRESERVATION PRINCIPLES

In June, City Council signed a resolution reaffirming the City's commitment to the Arkansas River Water Preservation Principles and in support of regional efforts to oppose permanent out-of-basin transfers from our water-short basin.

In 2003, the City of Colorado Springs, alongside Southeastern, Lower, and Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy Districts, the City Council of Pueblo and Pueblo Board of Water Works, ratified the principles, which were adopted with the belief that collaboration among the signatories would enhance their ability to protect water in the Arkansas River Basin.

Now, two decades later, the basin faces a new challenge as Aurora seeks to transfer more agricultural water out of the Lower Arkansas Valley. Springs Utilities is committed to the partnerships it has developed in the Valley through its water sharing program that manages existing supplies and sustains agriculture viability in the basin.

Standing with these partners is important, builds trust and protects the Arkansas River Basin as a whole.

EXPANDING PARTNERSHIP WITH FORT CARSON

In March 2022, Springs Utilities entered into an Intergovernmental Support Agreement with Fort Carson, assuming maintenance and operations oversight for streetlights, water cathodic protection, natural gas and

Springs Utilities became the first utility in Colorado to be recognized as StormReady by the National Weather Service (NWS). Utilities Board members and staff pose with a representative of the National Weather Service in October 2024.



electric systems – with no impact on customer rates.

The next level of partnership was approved in 2024 for Springs Utilities to take on Fort Carson's water distribution systems. This partnership includes ongoing maintenance and assisting in the upgrade of the control system. Fort Carson will reimburse Springs Utilities for all operations and maintenance expenses.

This partnership benefits both parties, ensuring the city's economic vitality while enhancing Fort Carson's utility resilience.

CREDIT RATINGS BENEFIT CUSTOMERS

Credit ratings play a crucial role in determining borrowing costs, directly impacting the competitiveness of Springs Utilities' rates. Standard & Poor's (S&P's) Global Ratings and Moody's reaffirmed Springs Utilities' strong credit ratings in 2024. Moody's gave a rating of Aa2 and S&P was AA+. These ratings reflect the utility's robust financial position in the industry and underscore a commitment to financial stewardship.

MARTIN DRAKE POWER PLANT DEMOLITION

After less than two years of careful mitigation efforts and demolition work, the former Martin Drake Power Plant (Drake) has been taken to ground level – marking a dramatic change in the city's skyline for the first time in 100 years.

Demolition efforts began in the summer of 2023. From that time through July 2024, the project consisted of more than

Board Chair Dave Donelson and Board Member Randy Helms speak with engineer Lisa Hagerman during a tour of the Phillip H. Tollefson Water Treatment Plant.

Utilities Board members David Leinweber, Randy Helms, Nancy Henjum, Michelle Talarico, and Board Chair Dave Donelson take a tour of the recently upgraded Phillip H. Tollefson Water Treatment Plant



83,000 hours of labor and the removal of approximately 8,700 gross tons of metal, filling 770 truckloads.

The Drake demolition effort was particularly complex due to the site's proximity to densely populated neighborhoods and I-25. A wide range of measures were used to limit dust, reduce noise, and protect air quality such as interior and exterior irrigation systems, section-by-section removal of stacks and weeks-long chemical removal processes prior to demolition.

Drake was permanently closed in September 2022 after nearly 100 years in operation. Prior to its closure, the plant's role had shifted to a peak demand facility. The six state-of-the-art natural gas units located to the west of the former plant now serve Drake's role as peak generation.

PROJECT COPE FUNDING INCREASES

Project COPE provides utilities payment assistance to customers struggling financially due to a personal crisis or emergency, regardless of income. This is the only local organization that dedicates its entire funding to utilities payment assistance year-round.

In 2024, \$1.74 million in bill assistance was given to customers, compared to \$1.09 million in 2023.

Project COPE is administered through the Colorado Springs Utilities Foundation and is funded through community and employee donations. Springs Utilities matches contributions up to \$500,000.

With the increased need for Project COPE funding, Springs Utilities in 2024 directed the \$256,000 in the annual budget for the Community Focus Fund to support the Colorado Springs Utilities Foundation. The CFF historically provided volunteer and grant support to local nonprofits.

This will increase Springs Utilities' contribution to Project COPE from \$500,000 to \$756,000 annually.

SPRINGS UTILITIES 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN APPROVED

In November 2024, the Utilities Board approved an updated strategic plan. The plan, effective Jan. 1, 2025, outlines strategic objectives for the coming years. The five strategic objectives are:

- 1 Operational excellence
- 2 Focus on the customer
- 3 Financial accountability
- 4 Support our community
- 5 Enable employee empowerment

By using this enterprise-level framework, Springs Utilities can ensure that organizational efforts are cohesive and efficient.

SPRINGS UTILITIES' 2025 BUDGET AND FIVE-YEAR RATE CASE APPROVED

On Nov. 12, 2024, City Council approved the Springs Utilities' 2025 budget and five-year rate case. The new base rates for 2025-2029 and the 2025 budget became effective Jan. 1, 2025.

Springs Utilities is facing historic demands and plans to add \$3.9 billion in infrastructure during the next five years to meet regulations, support community growth and maintain system reliability.

The 2025 budget is currently estimated at \$1.8 billion – a 21% increase over the 2024 approved budget. Despite these challenges, the financial plan is expected to keep rates competitive compared to other Front Range utilities.



Utilities Board Chair Dave Donelson, Vice Chair Yolanda Avila, and Board Member David Leinweber attend the 2024 Children's Water Festival.

The rate case also included approval of a new time-of-day rate, called Energy Wise. With Energy Wise rates, customers pay different rates for electricity based on the time of day it is used. This rate will become the standard rate for most customers in late 2025.

This gives customers the option to pay lower electric rates by shifting use to certain times of day. By doing so, they can help reduce high demand and the need to build even more sources of electric generation, such as power plants.

MISKEL RESERVOIR NAMED

In December 2024, City Council voted to rename the future Lower Williams Creek Reservoir in honor of Harold Miskel.

Harold Miskel worked at Springs Utilities from 1966-1999. He was an integral part of securing water for Colorado Springs and led numerous water rights negotiations, including the effort to obtain a municipal exchange water right – the Arkansas River Exchange Decree.

Miskel also served on the Colorado Water Conservation Board, the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District Board and as president of the Colorado Water Congress in the 1980s. In 2016, he was named the Wayne N. Aspinall Water Leader of the Year by the Colorado Water Congress.

The Harold Miskel Reservoir will be located about 16 miles southeast of Colorado Springs. This future reservoir is aptly named, as it will improve yields from water exchanges by providing storage for the City's imported reusable return flows as part of the Southern Delivery System.

UTILITIES POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE STUDIES NUCLEAR POWER

The Utilities Policy Advisory Committee (UPAC) is an advisory committee of the Utilities Board that reviews, analyzes and provides recommendations on specific issues or policies based on requests by the Board.

Beginning in July 2024, UPAC examined nuclear power options for Springs Utilities. Specifically, they looked at what the organization needs to do to prepare for nuclear power generation, the state of technology, regulatory requirements and cost estimates. The Utilities Board approved UPAC's recommendations on Feb. 16, 2025.

NORTHERN MONUMENT CREEK INTERCEPTOR PROJECT

City Council approved an intergovernmental agreement in February 2025 in which partners agree to share in the construction costs of the Northern Monument Creek Interceptor Project.

The partners are Springs Utilities, Triview Metropolitan District, and Forest Lakes Metropolitan District.

The project will consolidate separate wastewater treatment systems into a centralized system. The project is designed to increase efficiency for regional wastewater return flow operations, improve system reliability, prepare for future growth, and maintain compliance with water quality regulations. Construction is expected to start in 2026.

The wastewater interceptor (pipeline) will run from the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility, north of the Air Force Academy, to the J.D. Phillips Water Resource Recovery Facility, located near I-25 and Garden of the Gods Road in Colorado Springs.

The proposed project traverses the Air Force Academy and includes a total of 10.1 miles of pipeline when laterals are included.



Utilities Board Members Michelle Talarico, David Leinweber, and Nancy Henjum tour the Monument Creek Stabilization project.

LEGISLATIVE Services

CITY COUNCIL IS SUPPORTED BY LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

All nine Councilmembers are supported by a staff of nine and are tasked with doing a wide range of responsibilities including scheduling, legislative research, constituent response, media coordination, event planning, and more.

VISION STATEMENT

Advancing the legislative priorities of the City of Colorado Springs through collaboration with Councilmembers, Executive Leadership, and members of the public.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Colorado Springs Legislative Services Staff provides non-partisan expertise and support the the City Council to inform impactful policy-making, engage constituents and stakeholders, and promote responsive local governance.

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES STAFF

- » **Emily Evans** City Council Administrator
- » **Michael Montgomery** Deputy City Council Administrator
- » **Carly Hoff** Senior Legislative Analyst
- » **Sam Friedman** Constituent and Outreach Program Coordinator
- » **Alex Ryden** Senior Public Communications Specialist
Legislative Services Employee of the Year
- » **Ayana García** Boards and Commissions Program Administrator
- » **Ashley Hughes** Staff Assistant to Council
- » **Ludmer Aker** Staff Assistant to Council



Civic ENGAGEMENT

BECOME MORE INVOLVED

There are many opportunities for citizens to engage with local government and your elected leaders. We encourage you to become more involved in the decisions impacting 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).

ATTEND A COMMUNITY MEETING

In addition to City Council Meetings, City Council holds many other public forums. In 2024, these included City Council District Town Halls and Community Meetings (such as meetings about Public Safety and Road Construction). Councilmembers also attended meetings with constituents, local media, and many organizations throughout the region.

ATTEND A REGIONAL MEETING

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.

SPEAK AT A MEETING

City Hall serves as a gathering space for demonstrations and other events where people congregate to recognize various public interests or concerns. All City Council Meetings are open to the public, and the Citizen Discussion portion of Regular Meetings allows the public to speak about any topic not on that agenda. Members of the public can also comment on specific agenda items during Regular Meetings.

REQUEST A COUNCILMEMBER

Councilmembers enjoy visiting schools and other organizations throughout Colorado Springs to educate about local government. If you would like a Councilmember to speak at a school or community event, please reach out to Legislative Services Staff at 719-385-5986 or AllCouncil@ColoradoSprings.gov.

TOUR CITY HALL

Councilmembers enjoy taking time to speak with groups during tours of City Hall. Want to know more about one of the City's most historic buildings? Reach out to Legislative Services Staff and we will be happy to take groups or individuals on a tour of the historic Colorado Springs City Hall.

City Hall is open to the public during City Council Meetings or Board Meetings. Councilmembers and Legislative Services Staff are accessible to constituents by appointment and are eager to speak about anything happening in their districts or across the city.



COLORADO SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL

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Phone: (719) 385-5986

TO FIND OUT WHAT CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT YOU LIVE IN VISIT:

[ColoradoSprings.gov/city-council-districts](https://coloradosprings.gov/city-council-districts)



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