

**Colorado Springs City Council**

# **Report to the Citizens**

**2015-16**





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## Serving the Citizens of Colorado Springs

Each year, with the consideration of public input, City Council adopts a strategic plan that prioritizes its goals and establishes measurable outcomes. Last year, Council worked to align its plan with the Mayor's strategic plan, focusing on four major areas of concern: Promoting Job Creation, Investing in Infrastructure, Building Community & Collaborative Relationships, and Excelling in City Services. The new plan, which sets the City's priorities from 2016 through 2020, shows cooperation between local government's legislative and executive branches, and a commitment to working together to accomplish goals over the next four years.

**Council Members are responsible stewards of the resources they've been entrusted with.**

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## Stormwater Agreement with Pueblo

Seventy-one stormwater projects will be completed over the next 20 years under an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) signed by the City of Colorado Springs, Colorado Springs Utilities, and Pueblo County. Projects range from large regional projects, community and local projects, and grant/capital improvements. These stormwater projects will enhance public safety, provide improved water detention, and reduce flows, sediment, and other pollutants entering drainages and going downstream.

The IGA commits the City and Colorado Springs Utilities to spend \$460 million for stormwater infrastructure, maintenance/operations, and education programs over the next two decades to improve the City's stormwater system. Included in the \$460 million is funding to leverage money toward additional grant projects and to address neighborhood and local stormwater projects. The 71 regional IGA projects were selected based on negotiations with Pueblo County to identify and prioritize stormwater projects that would benefit both Colorado Springs and downstream communities.

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## 2C Ballot Measure Funding

Ballot item 2C passed by an overwhelming 65 percent of the vote in the Colorado Springs November 3, 2015 Special Municipal Election. This new road improvement tax will provide an estimated \$50 million per year to pave

approximately 1,000 lane miles over the next five years. The sales tax revenues will be dedicated solely to paving roads, with approximately 50 percent of it being applied to sidewalks, curb and gutter. Replacing or repairing concrete is an essential part of streets maintenance, which protects the roadways from deterioration. These improvements will also add pedestrian ramps and create passable routes that meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and enhance accessibility in Colorado Springs. City Council showed transparency by establishing a citizen committee to oversee the prudent expenditure of 2C funds.

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## 2D Ballot Measure Funding

Voters also approved ballot item 2D in the November 2015 election, which allowed the City to use the \$2.1 million it received in excess revenue from 2014 to fix local trails in dire need of repair or improvements. City Council worked closely with the Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department to identify eight trails in the city most in need of some TLC: Homestead Trail, Palmer Mesa Trail, Pikes Peak Greenway, Rock Island Trail, Sand Creek Trail, Shooks Run Trail, Sinton Trail, and Skyline Trail. These paved trails connect neighborhoods and are used by commuters, parents, cyclists, joggers, and workers on their lunch break. The trails are now free of potholes, cracks, and upheavals that could potentially injure someone.

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## Pedestrian Access Act

The City of Colorado Springs listened to the concerns of its citizens concerning the Pedestrian Access Act, an ordinance designed to keep City sidewalks clear of traffic during business hours. The ordinance as it was originally conceived and presented to City Council in August 2015 did not meet all of the City's requirements for safety on the sidewalks. Councilmembers adjusted their approach based on citizen input and approved the ordinance, which prevents sitting, kneeling, reclining, and lying down in the public right-of-way both downtown and in the Old Colorado City Commercial District during certain parts of the day.

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## Infill and Redevelopment Plan

Infill and redevelopment activities include the development, redevelopment, major renovation and/or adaptive use of properties or buildings in the older and largely developed areas of the City. Councilmembers recognized the importance of infill and redevelopment to the future of

**City Council made prudent land use decisions over the past year, balancing the needs of the community with the rights of private land owners.**

Colorado Springs and passed this plan to keep already developed areas of the City vibrant and thriving. The Infill and Redevelopment Plan will be a cornerstone of the City's 2016 Comprehensive Plan.

## **Marijuana Regulations**

Keeping up with the changes presented by Colorado's legalized marijuana industry was an important focus for the City this past year. The Council remained conscious of public safety and prudent business regulation while imposing reasonable limits on this burgeoning industry. Important decisions reached by Council included:

In August 2015, Council voted for new laws restricting the production of marijuana concentrates in residential settings.

In November 2015, Council voted to create a six-month moratorium on the processing of any land use approval or licensing application for a new medical marijuana facility or the change of location or expansion of a currently operating medical marijuana facility within the City limits.

In April 2016, Council acted on the recommendations of its Marijuana Task Force and created a number of new residential growing restrictions, including changing the number of marijuana plants that residents could lawfully grow for personal use to 12.

## **City Council – supporting a recovering economy**

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported Colorado Springs added 7,400 jobs in 2015, more than any year since 2000. Council worked to improve the local economy by supporting:

- The Sports Medicine and Performance Center at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs is a 72,000 square foot facility that will draw out-of-state patients to Colorado Springs for acute sport-related healthcare.
- The 60,000 square foot U.S. Olympic Museum will become a premier cultural destination, welcoming people from near and far, and of all ages and backgrounds, to come together in the spirit of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

- The new Air Force Academy Visitors Center will serve as a gateway to the city and include flight simulators, a 250-seat theater, a conference room, a mock-up of a cadet's room, displays for cadet sports, and an outdoor viewing area.
- The National Cybersecurity Center will accelerate efforts to make Colorado Springs a national hub for cybersecurity and help local industries to grow more quickly.

## **Working with our Military Partners**

### **Joint Land Use**

The Colorado Springs Regional Joint Land Use Study is a community-driven process to consider how the region can plan for a future that ensures successful growth, economic health, and continued military operations for Fort Carson, the U.S. Air Force Academy, Peterson Air Force Base including Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, and Schriever Air Force Base. City Council supported the study and the work that will continue over the next two years, which will include:

- Formation of policy and technical committees and various working groups
- Engaging public discussion
- A detailed land use assessment for areas surrounding the five installations

### **Keep Carson Strong**

Colorado Springs City Council supported the decision to make February 3, 2015 a citywide annual "Keep Carson Strong Day." Council recognizes the military base as an important economic driver of our community. Citizens are encouraged to wear green on this day and post their supportive stories about why they value Fort Carson to social media with the hashtag #KeepCarsonStrong.

### **United States Air Force Academy**

Colorado Springs City Council continues to work with the United States Air Force Academy on providing access to popular trails and drainage issues that affect the Academy.

**City Council approved the 2016 budget in 2015, balancing fiscal responsibility with providing services that are immediately needed.**



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