

# Colorado Springs City Council Report to the Citizens



2017-2018



## *Voters supported all three Council-referred ballot measures in the April 2017 Municipal Election.*

### **Ballot Issue 1:**

More than 80 percent of voters approved this amendment to the city charter requiring 60 percent voter approval for the sale of any part of Colorado Springs Utilities.

### **Ballot Issue 2:**

More than 65 percent of voters approved this amendment that allows the City to keep up to \$6 million of its fiscal year revenue in 2016 and 2017 to address stormwater needs. Council passed a Resolution of Support for Issue 2 at its March 14 Regular City Council Meeting, stating, "Adoption of Issue 2 allows the City to invest in much needed infrastructure, meet its legal and contract obligations and still refund money to city residents without a tax increase."

### **Ballot Issue 3:**

More than 60 percent of voters approved this amendment which exempts Colorado Springs from Senate Bill 152, reestablishing the City's authority to facilitate, partner, or coordinate with service providers to provide advanced telecommunications services to its citizens.

### **Strawberry Hill Land Exchange**

On Tuesday, May 24, 2016, City Council voted 6 – 3 to approve a land exchange between the City of Colorado Springs and The Broadmoor involving the Strawberry Hill Area, located within North Cheyenne Cañon Park, south of Mesa Avenue.

The City gained more than 371 acres of property and more than 115 acres of new public trail easements in exchange for its 189.5 acres. The value of the property the City received has an estimated fair market value of \$3,609,800 which exceeds the estimated value of the property it traded, which is \$2,161,000.

## *Government Transparency Districting Process Advisory Committee*

City Council wants to ensure the districting process is fair and represents constituents as the city continues to grow. 2016 marked the first time a Districting Process Advisory Committee (DPAC) was appointed by Council and convened for the purpose of conducting public education efforts around the districting process. City Charter requires the City Clerk to redraw the six City Council district boundaries every four years and the DPAC conducted public meetings in all six districts, as well as a final meeting at City Hall, providing insight on the process and soliciting public input. The Committee summarized the input they received and made preliminary recommendations for election district boundaries to the City Clerk. The Committee also made recommendations on how the process could be improved, and these changes will be incorporated into the public outreach process in the future.

### **Open Data**

Transparency is a critical value for City Council, and they support the new technology tools being used to achieve it. For example, last year, the City of Colorado Springs began providing real-time government-reported construction, crash and road closure data to the navigation app Waze. Citizens can see the real-time results of their tax dollars at work, as Waze provides one of the most succinct, thorough overviews of current road conditions today.

"As we improve our infrastructure, we need to make sure that citizens know that we are making every effort to keep them informed and safe," said Jay Anderson, Citizen Engagement Specialist. "Citizens know that the City is using 2C dollars to improve their roads, and while that construction is happening Waze can alert them to cone zones to keep them and our construction crews safe. Rather than create something new and ask citizens to use it, the City is pushing our road closure and cone zone data to where the largest community of drivers already get their information."





## *The next generation of engaged citizens*

On October 28, third graders from Ranch Creek Elementary School held a mock Council meeting in City Council Chambers, debating and voting on allowing goats to be kept as pets within city limits. The annual event encourages students to engage in lively and informed debate, giving a firsthand taste of the kind of work City Council members must tackle.

## *Increased Engagement on City's Boards & Commissions*

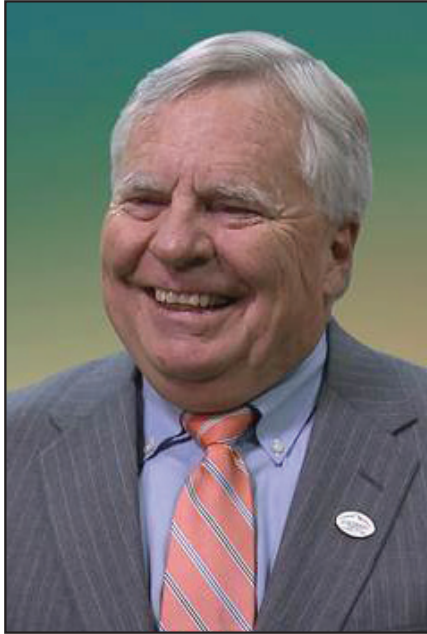
Eric Phillips partnered with City Council to found the Civic Engagement Program three years ago as a way to help citizens educate themselves on the structure and policy issues of the City by shadowing and serving on Boards, Commissions, and Committees. The program sends participants through Board Governance Training at El Pomar Foundation and helps place members on City boards that are a good fit. Last year, two members of the CEP were placed on City boards.

*Civic Engagement Program graduate Reggie Graham was appointed to the Planning Commission last year.*





## *President's Corner with Council President Merv Bennett*



It was an honor to serve the citizens of Colorado Springs this past year. In addition to its regularly scheduled meetings, City Council made a concerted effort to reach out to other governing bodies in our city and state to make sure we're staying connected with the larger world outside of City Hall. Council held joint meetings with the Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC, Urban Renewal Authority, Planning Commission, Board of County Commissioners, and many others last year. We know that issues at the state level can affect us here in the Springs as well. That's why City Council members took our local concerns about issues like transportation and completing the Ring the Peak Trail to Governor Hickenlooper's office at the State Capitol this past March. Outreach events like these helped ensure we went farther together in 2016.

This is your City Hall and City Council is here to serve you. Visit us downtown or on the web at [coloradospringsgov.com](http://coloradospringsgov.com) with your comments and concerns. We're looking forward to another great year.

## *Geological Hazard Ordinance*

The original Geological Hazards Ordinance was adopted by City Council back in 1996. An amendment in 2011 exempted properties east of I-25. All qualifying projects west of I-25 were subject to the ordinance. After many homes in town were experiencing issues with their foundations, City Council thought this ordinance needed a closer look.

Tom Strand

Council Member Don Knight and I, starting in May of last year, got involved in what we thought would help strengthen the chapter of our City code that deals with geohazard issues involving our community.

We held eight public meetings where we invited all the stakeholders in this process. The purpose was to tighten it up and ensure loopholes we felt existed were taken out.

We wanted to ensure for property owners, that they knew they'd be secure in how foundations were set up. That's why we worked with community of geohazard experts and building code experts.

There are two primary things that our amendment of the geohazard ordinance does:

1. The amendment ensures that the recommendations provided by staff at Colorado Geological Survey are implemented. Colorado Geological Survey Director Karen Berry came down and talked with us about how, initially, survey professionals involved in the beginning of the process, were not updated once the project was completed.
2. It equally deals with all of the property owners and the builders that work on both sides of I-25 in an equitable manner. It helps ensure all our community members, property owners, builders, and developers are looked after in the geohazard arena.

Council approved the new Geohazard Ordinance on a 9 – 0 vote at its March 14, 2017 Meeting.



A garden of 300 blue pinwheels along with interpretive signs were featured on the lawn of Colorado Springs City Hall during the month of April to bring attention to Child Abuse Awareness Month.

The Women's Club of Colorado Springs helped implement the project, which is part of a larger statewide effort, "Pinwheels for Prevention," organized since 2009 by Prevent Child Abuse Colorado.

## *Marijuana Working Group*

Council's Marijuana Working Group accomplished important work over the past year, including:

### **Prohibiting the unlawful transfer of marijuana**

Some local businesses had been circumventing the prohibition of the retail sale of marijuana by the "transfer" or "gifting" of marijuana in exchange for other goods or services. This practice was specifically outlawed in 2016 by the State Legislature. The practice is prohibited under the Colorado Revised Statutes and the proposed ordinance mirrors language from the state statute. By adopting an ordinance pertaining to the unlawful transfer of marijuana, the City may more efficiently utilize its Municipal Court system in conjunction with its zoning enforcement remedies and any available remedies through the State court system.

### **Location cap on marijuana businesses**

This ordinance created a cumulative cap on licensed medical marijuana locations. As of May 25, 2017, there shall be a maximum number of 212 distinct locations in the city where one or any combination of the following may be licensed in the same premises location: medical marijuana center, medical marijuana optional premises cultivation facility, and medical marijuana infused product manufacturer facility. As of May 25, the local licensing authority shall not receive or act upon any application for a new medical marijuana center license.

### **Guidelines for marijuana testing facilities**

Medical marijuana testing facility licenses shall be capped at one licensed location for every one hundred (100) licensed medical marijuana locations that are subject to the cumulative cap on licensed medical marijuana locations.



## *yourCOS Council*

These short videos, which launched in September 2016, highlight why City Council members chose to serve their community and what they love about Colorado Springs. Produced by the City's in-house video studio SpringsTV, the yourCOS Council videos got great traction on social media and introduced the community to another side of their city leaders.



## Renew North Nevada Avenue

North Nevada Avenue was recognized as an Economic Opportunity Zone several years ago, and one of the key recommendations was that a Master Plan be completed. The City moved forward in the summer of 2016, working to complete the Master Plan and apply for state funding of the project.

In March 2017, Colorado Springs City Council formally approved and adopted the Renew North Nevada Master Plan. The plan for revitalizing North Nevada Avenue included input from nearly 900 area residents who participated through roundtable discussions, online surveys, and community workshops.

More information on the Renew North Nevada Avenue Plan is available at [coloradosprings.gov/renewnave](http://coloradosprings.gov/renewnave).

## Investing in the Future of Colorado Springs

City Council and the Mayor share values around engagement and investing in our city's future. Council supports the Mayor's Young Leader Task Force, created by Mayor John Suthers in January of 2016. It consists of approximately 20 dynamic young professionals from various organizations in our community. The group directly supports the City's mission to empower and engage young leaders in our community by identifying local issues surrounding attracting and retaining young professionals. It is their goal to bridge the gap in the workforce and create a greater sense of community in Colorado Springs by actively addressing these concerns.

In 2016, the Task Force focused on growing the level of engagement in local boards and commissions, increasing citizen awareness of city government processes, the importance of voting and becoming involved in our community.



## PlanCOS: A new comprehensive plan for Colorado Springs

For the first time in 15 years, the City of Colorado Springs, together with City Council, is creating a comprehensive plan for the city's future, and they want an abundance of citizen input. With citizen input as a paramount value, PlanCOS asks citizens, "what do you want Colorado Springs to be in 10-20 years?" From new shopping areas, community centers, housing choices, employment, educational opportunities, trails, recreation facilities and redevelopment, to a re-invented downtown, PlanCOS will set the stage for the City's future. Land use is in Council's purview, and Council pushed for funding to conduct this critical process.

The process began in the middle of 2016 and will continue through 2017 and into 2018 for anticipated adoption of the new Plan. PlanCOS will be a blueprint for the physical development of the City, and is expected to be both aspirational and implementable. The Plan is also intended to address the use and relationship of more specific plans such as neighborhood plans, transportation plans and the Parks plan. This process is being supported by an 18-member Mayor-appointed Steering Committee, a consultant team, City staff, and community stakeholders.

For more information on how to provide input and get involved, visit [coloradosprings.gov/plancos](http://coloradosprings.gov/plancos).



Thousands of families flocked to the What If? Festival downtown Colorado Springs, and City Planner Carl Schueler asked them, "What do you love about Colorado Springs?" The City is currently soliciting citizen input from all across the city to create a truly collaborative effort to build the vision for our city in the next couple of decades. To offer your input, visit [www.coloradosprings.gov/speakup](http://www.coloradosprings.gov/speakup) or tweet your thoughts with #PlanCOS.





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