

Colorado Springs Recovery Center
1855 Aeroplaza Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80916

Response to Community Comments

Dear Community Members,

We would like to thank the Southeast Colorado Springs community for sharing your perspectives and concerns regarding the proposed Colorado Springs Recovery Center ("CSRC"). We value this dialogue and view it as an opportunity to strengthen our project and our partnership with the neighborhood. If you recently submitted a response in writing to the planning department, you will receive an individual response by either mail or email.

We also want to acknowledge the feedback that some residents felt they were not adequately notified about this proposal. From our perspective, we believed we had done a thorough job providing details to community members and stakeholders throughout our process. If we did not reach everyone we should have, or if our efforts fell short, we recognize this as an area for improvement and are committed to doing better moving forward. The individuals we engaged with prior to this stage identified a few groups and individuals for us to contact, and as you can see, we made every effort to reach out accordingly. That is why we were surprised to hear communication raised as an issue, as much of our direct outreach had been met with support. Still, we are committed to expanding this engagement to ensure all voices are heard. As we have stated, we will only make commitments we can confidently stand by. Our future engagement and collaboration with the immediate community is one such commitment we intend to uphold.

We also understand that some residents support the project conceptually but oppose its location. This is unfortunate to hear, particularly when the same voices acknowledge the depth of the drug and alcohol problem in this very area. The reality is that lack of access to long-term care and extended waitlists dramatically increase the probability of relapse, incarceration, and even death. To oppose our permitted use in the precise neighborhood where it is needed most reflects a "Not in My Backyard" stance. The more we listen to community comments, the more convinced we are that Southeast Colorado Springs is exactly where these resources are most urgently required.

Community Safety and Law Enforcement Collaboration

Safety is and will remain our highest priority. The facility will operate with 24/7 professional staff, controlled entry points, delayed egress doors, and a security system that exceeds any requirements. Each resident will undergo a full screening and admission process, including public record checks and clinical evaluations. We do not admit registered sex offenders or individuals with substantial violent criminal histories.

To provide context, within five miles of the proposed site there are hundreds of registered sex offenders. Of those, 202 live within three miles and 30 within one mile, including one individual who resides on the same street as the proposed facility. Our residents, by contrast, will be clinically supervised, screened, and engaged in structured care. They will not increase existing risks. In fact, our mission is to reduce them by addressing untreated addiction. If there are questions about the population we serve or how we provide services, we welcome the discussion.

Concerns about residents leaving treatment against clinical advice are also understood. At this level of care, residents are generally more stable and motivated to remain, so walk-outs occur far less frequently than in higher levels of care programs. Still, when they do occur, CSRC follows strict discharge planning protocols to ensure individuals are transported to a safe location. In the rare event someone leaves on their own, their intent is not to harm families or children, but to disengage from treatment.

We have also heard feedback from the Colorado Springs Police Department requesting a perimeter fence and a fence at the entrance. We are committed to installing what we are permitted to under city code. With respect to concerns about CSPD response times, it is important to clarify that true emergencies requiring immediate law enforcement intervention will be very rare due to the structure of our program. In the unlikely event of an emergency, we trust CSPD to respond promptly as they do throughout the city.

Neighborhood Character, Schools, and Parks

Some residents have raised concerns about proximity to schools and parks. We want to emphasize that behavioral health facilities like ours already operate near schools and parks throughout Colorado and across the United States. Independent studies and city data confirm that these facilities do not increase crime or pose risks to children. Residents remain onsite except for scheduled, supervised therapeutic activities. In over four decades of combined leadership experience, we have never had an incident involving a child at or near a facility like ours.

Our residents are parents, siblings, and children themselves; many of them deeply invested in protecting families and community safety. Panorama Park, a cornerstone of the neighborhood, has already been the site of overdoses. By providing treatment nearby, we reduce, not increase, the likelihood of these tragedies occurring.

Property Values and Community Revitalization

It has been suggested that our facility may lower property values. There is no peer-reviewed research supporting this claim. On the contrary, evidence shows that property values near treatment centers remain stable or even increase. Public records confirm that homes surrounding behavioral health facilities in Colorado Springs continue to sell above asking price.

CSRC will invest directly in property upgrades, landscaping, and fencing where permitted. We will convert existing hotel rooms into private offices and transform larger areas into group and community spaces without altering the physical structure. Our improvements will enhance curb appeal and overall neighborhood appearance. Our project will also create 75+ local jobs, including healthcare professionals and support staff, offering training and advancement opportunities that strengthen the local workforce.

Consistency with the Southeast Strong Plan and PlanCOS

Our project is directly aligned with the Southeast Strong Community Plan and PlanCOS, which call for targeted reinvestment, equitable health access, and stronger neighborhood safety. The plan identifies Southeast Colorado Springs as an area disproportionately affected by poverty, health inequities, and disinvestment, while also highlighting the extraordinary grassroots movement that has emerged to stimulate change.

Well-Being Goal H5 - Expand access to affordable healthcare, including Medicaid-accepting clinics. Partner with nonprofits to establish direct primary care facilities where there are gaps. Address mental health and promote self-care as essential services. This is a goal directly referenced, and it is precisely what we are bringing to the community.

CSRC directly supports Southeast Strong's core "Big Ideas" by:

- **Supporting Community Safety:** We reduce unmanaged addiction in public spaces, decreasing overdoses and unsafe behaviors in parks and public areas.
- **Promoting Health Equity:** By offering long-term treatment locally, we eliminate barriers to care that force residents onto waitlists, increasing risks of relapse, incarceration, and death.
- **Fostering Economic Vitality:** Our project creates stable employment, improves property conditions, and injects investment into the community.

- Adaptive Reuse of Property: Our work is consistent with PlanCOS guidance to adapt existing structures for new, community-serving purposes rather than leaving them vacant or failing.

In every respect, this project is a direct response to the priorities identified by Southeast Strong and PlanCOS: safe neighborhoods, improved health, and sustainable community investment.

Transparency, Accountability, and Community Partnership

We are committed to being transparent and accountable neighbors. Our performance metrics and treatment outcomes will be made publicly available. We will host monthly community meetings at the facility, providing regular opportunities to share updates and receive feedback.

In addition, our supervised volunteer program will have immediate, tangible impacts on the neighborhood. Residents will engage in park clean-ups, sidewalk and public way litter removal, snow removal, and other community support activities. These efforts will not only improve the surrounding area but will also instill accountability and responsibility in residents' recovery journeys.

Our leadership team is committed to becoming part of this community, not simply operating within it. We will actively collaborate with neighborhood organizations, civic groups, and city leaders to ensure our presence is a source of support and partnership.

Conclusion

Colorado Springs is in the midst of a public health crisis. In 2023 alone, more than 1,800 Coloradans lost their lives to overdoses, and over 1,700 individuals experienced homelessness in El Paso County. These numbers demonstrate the urgent need for treatment access. CSRC exists to meet that need.

Our residents are not defined by their diagnoses. They are mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, neighbors and colleagues. They are people striving to rebuild their lives. With robust safety protocols, compliance with city planning and zoning, alignment with the Southeast Strong vision, and a deep commitment to community partnership, Colorado Springs Recovery Center will reduce homelessness, reduce overdoses, and contribute to the revitalization and health of Southeast Colorado Springs.

The City of Colorado Springs and its departments have been diligent and thorough in their review of this project to ensure it aligns with both the city's scope and long-range planning efforts. At no point have city officials shied away from asking questions or holding us accountable to the highest standards. We firmly believe their intent has been clear: to ensure that the interests of the community remain the priority throughout this process. This level of oversight reinforces confidence that the project will not only meet regulatory requirements but also serve the long-term goals and well-being of Southeast Colorado Springs.

Together, we can build a safer, healthier, and stronger future for our community.

Sincerely,

Anthony Angerillo
Christopher Foster