

Planning Commission

2026 Boards, Commissions, and Committees Work Plan

Chair: Kenneth Casey
Vice Chair: Nadine Hensler
Staff Liaison: Solange Baquero-Meza

Composition, Powers and Duties

The City of Colorado Springs Unified Development Code (herein “UDC”) enables the establishment of the City’s Planning Commission. The CPC consists of nine (9) members and two (2) alternates appointed by City Council. (UDC Section 7.5.502.A.1) The CPC, per UDC Code Section 7.5.502.C *Powers and Duties*, is charged with performing certain functions within the City’s Charter, specifically the UDC. As specified in this UDC, the CPC through the execution of their duties outlined in Table 7.5.1-A perform the following:

1. Engage in cooperative planning programs with the planning agencies, officials, and representatives of other governmental units and with private agencies and organizations to encourage, coordinate, and unify planning of the urban metropolitan area centering on the City.
2. Call upon any officer or employee of the City for any services, advice, or consultation the Commission deems necessary.
3. Request outside consultants or other entities to assist the Commission in performing its functions, provided City Council has appropriated funds for those expenses.

Through the actions of the Planning Commission, it is the intent of the City to have available all powers of a home rule municipality under Colorado law to control land uses, land development, and the impacts of land use and development.

Goal 1: Comprehensive Planning and Development Application Review and Decisions

- **Description:** The Planning Commission shall participate in the City’s comprehensive planning and development review process. In this capacity, the Planning Commission shall review all applications brought before them in a timely manner and consistently act as the decision-making body or, when appropriate, make recommendations to City Council.
- **Timeline:** Ongoing
- **Responsible Parties:** This initiative is facilitated by the City Planning Department and supports the Planning Commission’s regular review and decision-making of comprehensive planning initiatives, amendments to the City’s UDC and development applications.
- **Resources Needed:** Time allocation with City agencies and staff
- **Expected Budget/Policy Outcomes:** The decisions of the CPC have a profound effect on the City’s budget by shaping the tax base and service and use programming. Comprehensive planning and development decisions also align various policies initiatives of the City and guide balanced changes and strengthen community connections.

Goal 2: Education and Training

- **Description:** This initiative equips Planning Commission members with the legal foundation, technical expertise, and current knowledge needed to make informed, objective, and legally defensible decisions that guide their community's long-term growth and development. Continuing education and training opportunities ensure the CPC is prepared to effectively guide changes to the City's built environment through physical development and quality of life for all members of their community.
- **Timeline:** Ongoing
- **Responsible Parties:** This initiative is facilitated by the City Planning Department and ensures all Planning Commission members, which are citizen volunteers, understand the complexity of planning, zoning laws, and meeting procedures. By bridging knowledge gaps, commissioners can more effectively guide community development, make sound quasi-judicial decisions, and serve the public interest by staying current with best practices and legal requirements, preventing costly errors, and fostering better public trust.
- **Resources Needed:** Time allocation of City agencies and staff
- **Expected Budget/Policy Outcomes:** Through on-going training, Planning Commission members will improve decision-making, enhance professionalism, and ensure legal compliance. Together, training provides the essential skills to prevent costly legal challenges and ensure decisions are defensible in court, which protects the community's interests.

Goal 3: Furthering Public Interest

- **Description:** Planning Commissioners are crucial advocates for public interest, ensuring the voices of the community are heard during comprehensive planning and development reviews. While each Planning Commissioner is also a stakeholder in the community they are entrusted with balancing community needs and perspectives to ensure development aligns with long-term community goals and to build consensus and serve the public good.
- **Timeline:** Ongoing
- **Responsible Parties:** Planning Commissioners
- **Resources Needed:** Time allocation of City agencies and staff
- **Expected Budget/Policy Outcomes:** Thoughtful decision-making can result in long-term savings on infrastructure and service, support balanced growth and the reasonable use of community resources, and reinforce to the community that planning processes equitable and add value for all.