

Quick Facts

- Applicant**
Planning Department
- Applicable Plans**
PlanCOS
2006 Annexation Plan
- Address / Location**
Citywide
- Applicable Code**
7.5.706: Comprehensive Planning
- Council District**
All

Project Summary

AnnexCOS is a policy and planning framework document that guides annexation planning and decision-making for the City of Colorado Springs. Intended as an advisory document, it establishes annexation goals, policies, evaluation considerations, and implementation guidance to support consistent and informed review of annexation proposals. AnnexCOS updates and replaces the City's 2006 Annexation Plan, which has guided annexation policy for nearly two decades and no longer fully reflects current growth patterns, infrastructure considerations, regional agreements, or the community vision established in PlanCOS.

AnnexCOS complements the Colorado Revised Statutes, the Colorado Springs Unified Development Code, PlanCOS, the City's comprehensive plan, and other adopted City plans and policies, but does not replace statutory or regulatory requirements.

Developed in response to recommendations contained in PlanCOS, AnnexCOS modernizes the City's annexation framework to better address growth management, infrastructure planning, fiscal sustainability, and regional coordination. The plan also serves as the City's Three-Mile Plan and establishes an updated Area of Planning Interest (AoPI) to support long-range planning and coordination with regional partners.

Through its goals, policies, and evaluation criteria, AnnexCOS provides a consistent framework for evaluating annexation requests and supports strategic growth, efficient service delivery, fiscal responsibility, and implementation of the community vision established in PlanCOS.

File Number	Application Type	Decision Type
NPLN 26-0002	Annexation Plan	Legislative

Background

Prior Applicable Actions

<i>Action</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Date</i>
Comprehensive Plan	PlanCOS	2019
Unified Development Code (Chapter 7)	RetoolCOS	2023
City Strategic Plan	Citywide Strategic Plan 2024-2028	2024
Annexation Plan	2026 Annexation Plan	2006

Community Engagement

Stakeholder Committees

Internal Working Group

Nancy Henjum, City Council
Brian Risley, City Council
Andrea Slattery, Planning Commission
Colby Foos, Planning Commission

Technical Advisory

Charae McDaniel, Chief Financial Officer
Gayle Sturdivant, Deputy Public Works Director
Skyler Rorabaugh, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Director
Jessica Kimber, Economic Development Officer
Aimee Cox, Chief Housing & Homelessness Response Officer
Adrian Vasquez, Police Chief
Kris Cooper, Fire Marshal
Meggan Herrington, El Paso County Planning Director
Johnna Reeder Kleymeyer, Chamber EDC
Nick Peters, Colorado Springs Utilities

Other Stakeholders

Wade Broadhead, City of Fountain
Dan Ungerleider, Town of Monument
Frederick Rollenhagen, Town of Manitou Springs
Andrew Gunning, PPACG
Paul Rochette, PPACG
Darren Horstmeier, Shriever Space Force Base
Amy Kelley, USAFA

Public Engagement

AnnexCOS was informed by a public engagement process, which included community and stakeholder meetings, community open house, public engagement questionnaires, education panel, and a project webpage. Community engagement continues with the community adoption hearings.

Project Timeline

PHASE 01: MARCH - SEPT 2024 Foundation and Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Kickoff - 2006 Annexation Plan Review - Infrastructure Assessment 	Planning Commission Meeting City Council Work Session Speaker Panel Online questionnaire
PHASE 02: MAY - SEPT 2024 Annexation Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preliminary Annexation Goals 	Focus Group Meetings Technical Committee Meetings
PHASE 03: OCT 2024 – JAN 2025 Policies and Sustainability Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annexation Suitability Zones - Preliminary Fiscal Analysis - Annexation Goals and Policies 	Focus Group Meetings Technical Committee Meetings Community Event
PHASE 04: FEB – MARCH 2025 First Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First Draft 	Technical Committee Meetings Internal Working Group
PHASE 05: MARCH - DEC 2025 First Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document Review - Map Revisions 	Technical Committee Meetings Internal Working Group
PHASE 06: DEC 2025 – MAY 2026 Second Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Second Draft - Document Review 	Technical Committee Meetings Internal Working Group Stakeholder Meetings
PHASE 06: MAY – JULY Final Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final Draft - Community Engagement 	Technical Committee Meetings Internal Working Group Open House/Community Event

Summary

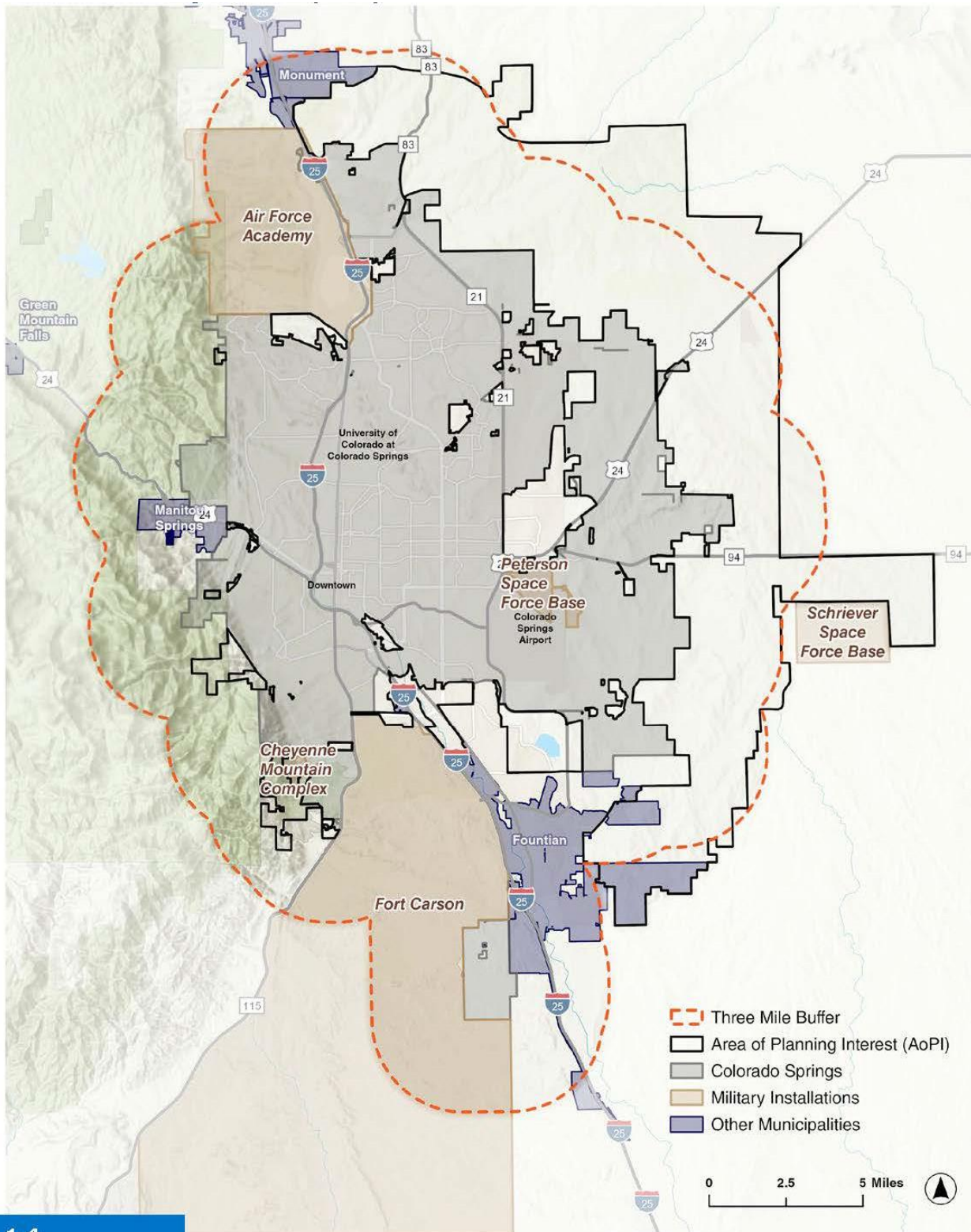
In 2019, the City of Colorado Springs adopted PlanCOS, its comprehensive citywide plan, which identified the need to modernize the City’s annexation strategies and policies to better support long-term growth management, infrastructure planning, fiscal sustainability, housing and employment needs, and regional coordination. AnnexCOS, the 2026 Annexation Plan, implements that direction by updating and replacing the City’s 2006 Annexation Plan.

AnnexCOS serves as the City’s official Three-Mile Plan pursuant to C.R.S. § 31-12-105(1)(e) and establishes an updated policy framework, evaluation criteria, and implementation guidance for future annexation planning and decision-making. It is intended to function as an operational planning tool rather than a regulatory document. The plan does not alter statutory annexation requirements, create an entitlement to annexation, or identify specific properties for annexation. Instead, it provides guidance for evaluating annexation petitions, coordinating among agencies, assessing infrastructure and service capacity, considering fiscal sustainability, and ensuring consistency with adopted City goals.

Since adoption of the 2006 Annexation Plan, Colorado Springs has experienced significant population growth, numerous annexations, adoption of PlanCOS, new intergovernmental agreements, evolving infrastructure and utility considerations, and changing community expectations regarding growth and development. AnnexCOS updates the City’s annexation framework to reflect these changes and provide contemporary policy guidance for future annexation decisions.

Annexation is the legal process by which land in unincorporated El Paso County is incorporated into the City of Colorado Springs. Annexations in Colorado are governed by the Colorado Constitution and the Colorado Municipal Annexation Act of 1965, C.R.S. Title 31, Article 12. State law authorizes annexation through voluntary petitions, annexation elections, enclave annexations, and annexation of municipally owned property. State law also requires municipalities to maintain an adopted Three-Mile Plan before completing annexations within three miles of municipal boundaries.

Three-Mile Plan & Area of Planning Interest Map



AnnexCOS directly implements PlanCOS by providing updated annexation goals, policies, evaluation criteria, and review procedures. PlanCOS called for updated guidance for strategic annexations, evaluation of existing annexation policies, greater attention to enclaves and near-enclaves, reconsideration of utility-served properties on the City's periphery, and an update to the Three-Mile Plan. AnnexCOS responds to those recommendations while also supporting the broader PlanCOS vision for balanced growth, infill and redevelopment, strategic outward expansion where appropriate, infrastructure efficiency, fiscal responsibility, economic development, and regional coordination.

A key component of AnnexCOS is the Area of Planning Interest (AoPI), established pursuant to the 2021 Annexation Intergovernmental Agreement between the City and El Paso County. The AoPI includes areas within and beyond the statutory three-mile planning boundary and serves as a long-range coordination tool for evaluating future annexation potential, infrastructure planning, utility service delivery, transportation planning, and regional cooperation. Inclusion within the AoPI does not mean annexation is anticipated or prioritized; rather, it identifies areas where future annexation evaluation or coordinated planning may occur.

The AnnexCOS project establishes several primary objectives: aligning annexation policy with PlanCOS, updating the City's Three-Mile Plan and AoPI Map, creating a consistent framework for evaluating annexation petitions, assessing public service and infrastructure capacity, improving predictability for property owners, strengthening coordination among the City, Colorado Springs Utilities, El Paso County, and other stakeholders, and supporting housing diversity, mixed-use development, employment growth, and coordinated development patterns.

AnnexCOS is organized around six goals:

Goal 1: Utilize the Three-Mile Plan and Area of Planning Interest as tools to inform and manage annexations and enclaves within Colorado Springs.

Goal 2: Use the provision of public facilities and services to guide annexation decisions toward desirable and sustainable locations.

Goal 3: Ensure adequate urban facilities and services are available to annexed areas.

Goal 4: Evaluate the fiscal impacts of annexation on both the City and Colorado Springs Utilities through consistent and standardized analysis.

Goal 5: Utilize annexation as a tool to achieve desired community form, support economic development, encourage housing opportunities, and implement PlanCOS goals and policies.

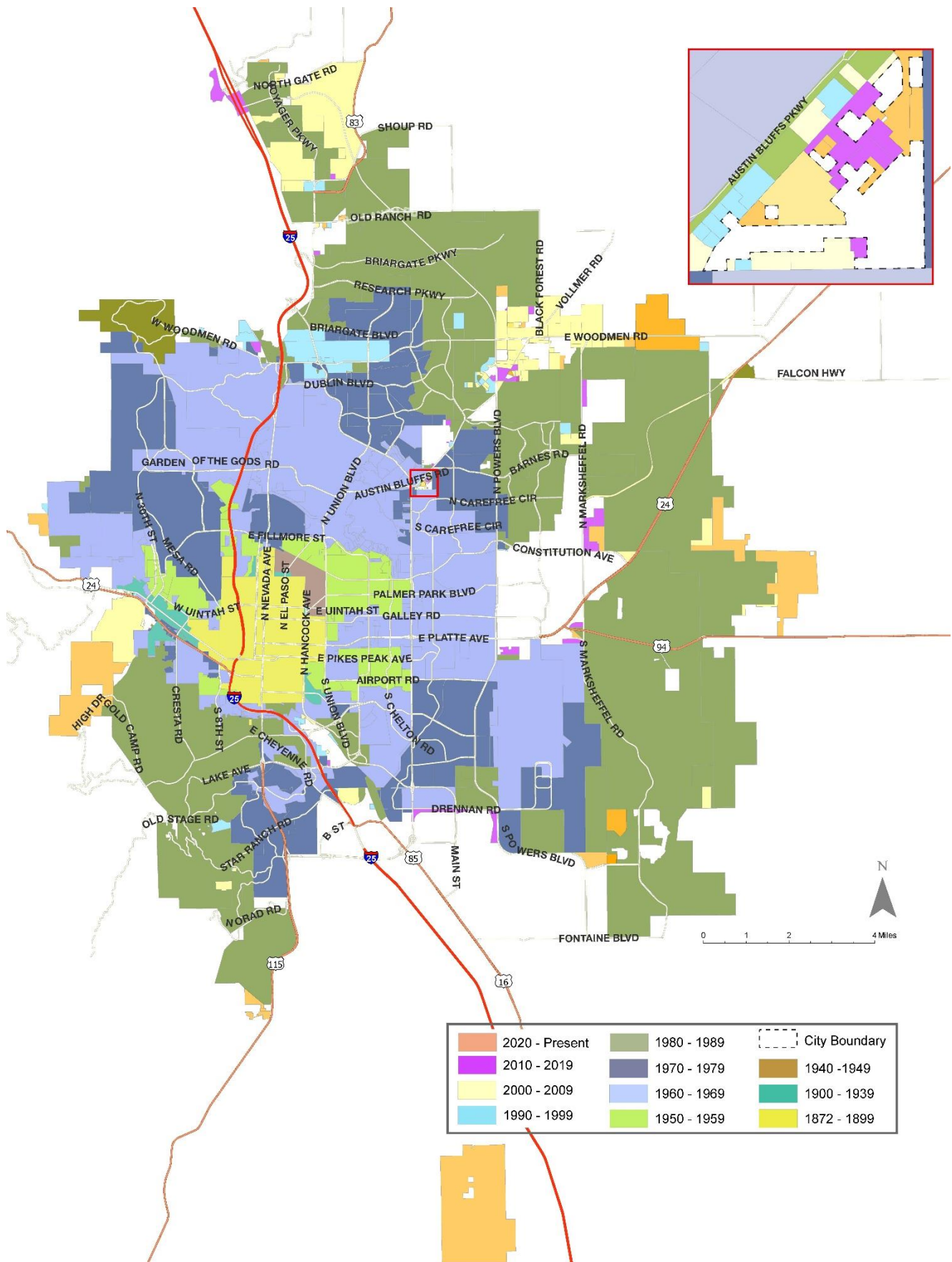
Goal 6: Implement annexation policies through intergovernmental cooperation, regional coordination, and partnerships with El Paso County, neighboring municipalities, military installations, utility providers, and other stakeholders.

The policies supporting these goals emphasize logical and contiguous boundary expansion, avoidance of new enclaves, voluntary annexation of existing enclaves where appropriate, efficient use of existing infrastructure, utility service feasibility and avoidance of inefficient service extensions, water resource sustainability, fiscal responsibility, coordinated growth patterns, support for housing diversity, economic development opportunities, coordination with military installations and neighboring jurisdictions, and compatibility with adopted City and regional plans.

To support consistent decision-making, AnnexCOS establishes an evaluation framework that considers utility service availability and capacity, transportation system compatibility, public safety and community service impacts, proximity to existing urban development, contiguity with City limits, parcel characteristics, exclusion factors such as federal lands or other municipal jurisdictions, and enclave feasibility. Each annexation proposal is intended to be evaluated based on its specific circumstances, including infrastructure capacity, service delivery, fiscal impacts, community objectives, and compatibility with surrounding development patterns.

AnnexCOS also outlines a structured annexation review process. The process includes consideration of an annexation petition, application of the City Council-adopted Annexation Checkpoint Policy, evaluation using AnnexCOS suitability criteria, assessment of consistency with AnnexCOS goals and policies, review for compliance with state law and City Code, comprehensive City analysis, Planning Commission review where applicable, and final legislative action by City Council.

ANNEXATION BY DECADE MAP



Most annexations are expected to continue to be initiated by property owners through voluntary petitions. AnnexCOS supports the use of annexation reports, standardized fiscal impact analysis, model templates, evaluation checklists, annexation agreements, and future updates to the Annexation IGA to improve transparency, consistency, and predictability in the review process.

Overall, AnnexCOS provides the City's updated annexation policy framework and serves as a key implementation tool for PlanCOS. It supports strategic growth, efficient service delivery, fiscal responsibility, infrastructure planning, housing and employment opportunities, and regional collaboration while preserving City Council's flexibility to consider the unique circumstances of individual annexation proposals.

Applicable Code

AnnexCOS is a subsidiary plan of PlanCOS, the City's comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive Plans are governed by Section 7.5.706: Comprehensive Planning of the Unified Development Code (UDC).

Application Review Criteria

The AnnexCOS plan was processed as an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan, PlanCOS. The proposed Plan was evaluated for conformance with the general "Purpose" of the Unified Development Code found in Section 7.1.103, which is to:

- A. Promote health, safety, and general welfare of the public;
- B. Protect private property from adjacent nuisances such as incompatible uses and noise;
- C. Implement the Colorado Springs Comprehensive Plan;
- D. Establish the orderly subdivision of land;
- E. Ensure the logical growth of the City's physical elements;
- F. Encourage adequate multi-modal transportation facilities;
- G. Promote opportunities for affordable and attainable housing throughout the City; and
- H. Facilitate adequate provision of utilities, schools, parks, and other public infrastructure services.
- I. Enhance the quality, diversity, and safety of neighborhoods by encouraging pride and investment.

The Plan was also evaluated using the UDC's Legislative Declaration found in Section 7.5.706.A which reads: "The City Council hereby finds, determines and declares that it is in the public interest that there be a Comprehensive Plan to promote the public health, safety and general welfare, to improve the physical environment of the City as a setting for human activities; to evaluate the social and economic effects of land development; to formulate, determine, and implement community values, policies, standards and objectives; to consider the effect on community financial capabilities, public, and private investments; and to consider the effect on the environment when making land development decisions."

Lastly, the Plan was evaluated for consistency with relevant guiding plans and PlanCOS itself (see below).

After evaluation of the AnnexCOS, the 2026 Annexation Plan, Staff finds that the Plan is consistent with the Purpose of the Zoning Code as well as the Code's legislative declaration and is supported by PlanCOS and relevant guiding plans.

Compliance with PlanCOS

AnnexCOS implements the annexation-related goals, policies, and implementation actions of PlanCOS. As part of its growth management strategy, PlanCOS identified the comprehensive update of the City's annexation policies and Three-Mile Plan as a key implementation initiative, including updated guidance for strategic annexations, enhanced consideration of enclaves and near-enclaves, coordination with utility and regional planning efforts, and evaluation criteria to support informed annexation decisions.

AnnexCOS fulfills these recommendations by establishing an updated annexation policy framework, Area of Planning Interest (AoPI), annexation goals and policies, evaluation criteria, and implementation guidance. The plan supports strategic and fiscally responsible growth, efficient use of infrastructure and public services, regional coordination, economic development, and the long-term growth and development vision established in PlanCOS. Accordingly, staff finds that AnnexCOS is consistent with and advances the goals, policies, and intent of PlanCOS.

Timeline for Adoption

City Planning Commission Work Session	June 4, 2026
City Council Lunch Presentation	June 9, 2026
City Planning Commission Formal	July 8, 2026
City Council Hearing	August 10, 2026

Statement of Compliance

NPLN-26-0002 – AnnexCOS, 2026 Annexation Plan

After evaluation of AnnexCOS, the 2026 Annexation Plan, Staff finds that the Plan is consistent with the Purpose of the Zoning Code, the Code's legislative declaration, is supported by PlanCOS and relevant guiding plans and fulfills the statutory Three-Mile Plan requirement under C.R.S. §31-12-105(1)(e).