

# Colorado Springs City Council Candidate Survey

Candidate name: Karlie Van Arnam

District: 5

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1. Do you support or oppose increasing taxes or fees, or the establishment of new taxes and fees? If you support increasing taxes and fees (or establishing new taxes and fees), what would be acceptable reasons to you?

I oppose new taxes and fees or the increase of taxes and fees. I certainly do not support increasing taxes and fees at a time like these when many of our residents and business owners are already struggling. Any proposed increase should be brought to the voters and only implemented when approved by the majority of voters.

2. What is your position regarding the elimination of motor vehicle traffic lanes (road-dieting) in favor of installing bicycle lanes? Please explain.

I don't believe increasing bike lanes through road dieting is going to reduce the dependence or need for personal vehicles in any meaningful way. Bike lanes have their place in certain areas with high "walk scores," but it is not a one-size fits all issue. I believe future development should prioritize walk ability and bike ability, in which case bike lanes are necessary to ensure safety for our bikers and drivers.

3. What is your opinion of infill projects that receive opposition from neighbors? Should zoning change projects proceed—even with opposition from the majority of neighbors living there?

When addressing this issue, the city needs to consider each neighborhood's individuality and make sure that long-time residents who have invested in their neighborhoods are not being alienated. Collaboration between the city, developers, and the residents is essential to ensure we are finding common ground and creating a result with the best possible outcomes for all affected parties. The city must also consider the direct impact to utilities and rate increases to the current and proposed residents as well as the impact to public and private transportation. Increasing diversity in density and housing styles is essential to keeping up with the city's growth; however, it must be approached in a comprehensive and thoughtful manner.

4. As Colorado Springs expands in population and infill projects press forward, infrastructure is stressed. What is your solution for financing new infrastructure?

Metro districts play an important role when financing new infrastructure. Ensuring developers are paying their fair share should also help finance new development. The efficient and fiscally responsible use of tax dollars is also a priority when improving the cities infrastructure.

5. As COVID-19 closures and restrictions persist, many local businesses are suffering. What should be done for businesses and their employees?

I support fully opening our business immediately. As small business owners, my husband and I have first-hand experienced the astounding hardships the closures have created. While we as a society have a duty to protect our most vulnerable, there is also a level of personal accountability we as individuals must have regarding our health. The solution should not be more detrimental than the problem. The response to Covid, in my opinion, created a bigger problem than the virus itself.

6. Local activists raised the issue of defunding the Colorado Springs Police Department. Do you support or oppose increasing the number of Colorado Springs police officers? Please explain.

While I do not believe in defunding the police department, I believe in transparency and accountability in law enforcement and all aspects of government. My grandfather was a member of the NYPD and the Denver PD. I understand the many sacrifices officers and their families face. However, police departments across the country are suffering from real and perceived uneven justice depending on race, sex, religion, origin, etc. and the City must do its part to overcome this reality. Our citizens deserve the reassurances that our officers have the most up to date training on best practices and procedures. We also have a duty to provide our officers with adequate resources to ensure they are prepared for the various circumstances they encounter.

7. Colorado Springs has a stormwater fee of \$5 per home, and \$30 per acre for businesses. The current council members appear to be in favor of a fee increase and will likely increase it soon. Many of the violations ruled on in a recent EPA lawsuit found that the City failed to enforce requirements that construction site operators implement appropriate measures to prevent polluted stormwater from running off active construction sites. During your term, will you vote to raise the stormwater fee?

I would not vote to raise the storm water fees. I believe referring the issue to voters and allowing our citizens and business owners to vote on the issue is appropriate. We also need to determine how this huge oversight that lead to these violations occurred. Government transparency is essential to ensure future violations and misuses of taxpayer resources are avoided.

8. Do you support or oppose the implementation of recreational marijuana within the City of Colorado Springs in order to capture additional tax revenue?

I support referring the measure to the voters and allowing our citizens to decide if we want recreational sales in our city. I would not support any initiative for recreational sales in Colorado Springs that does not allow all existing licenses an equal opportunity for a recreational license

9. There is a push in the City for separate affordable housing complexes. According to the National Association of Realtors, the average price of a home in Colorado Springs increased from \$175,000 to

\$371,900 in 10 years. Wages have not kept up with that increase. What is your solution to help residents afford housing?

The city needs to play an active role to ensure we have housing that meets the needs for all income levels. House prices are rising and many low income earners and those on fixed incomes are finding themselves priced out of the market. This negatively affects cost of labor and future economic growth. Housing insecurity also leads to homelessness and a myriad of other issues. The city should be directly investing in affordable housing, particularly for those earning 30-40% of the area median incomes. City Council should be also working with developers and builders to identify and reduce/eliminate cost prohibitive policy and red tape. While regulations are important to ensure quality and safety, excessive and redundant regulation and processes hinder the ability to build affordable housing quickly and efficiently.

10. Is there anything else you want the taxpayers to know about you, or is there an important topic we didn't ask about that you want to share?

I am a Colorado Native and have lived in Colorado Springs since age 18. I started off earning minimum wage, renting, working full time while pursuing my education. For the last 12 years, my husband and I have raised our son and built small, successful businesses in the city. I consider my story representative of many people who live here, who have struggled, taken risks and worked tirelessly to build something in order to provide our children with more than what we started with. I am now in a position to give back to my community that has helped my family be a part of the city's success. The city deserves leadership that cares about its present condition and the quality of life for its residents while also keeping an eye on the future. This is the perspective I will bring to City Council.