

## Colorado Springs City Council Candidate Survey

Candidate name: Dave Geislinger  
District: 2  
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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?

*Colorado Springs' Taxpayers Bill of Rights provides that taxes cannot be levied/increased without voter approval. I supported asking the voters for an extension of the tax to repair our roads and to allow the city to keep taxes collected in excess of the TABOR cap. In these circumstances because I was convinced that it was appropriate to do so. The voters agreed. While I will have to evaluate all evidence before committing, I suspect I will ask the voters to approve extensions of existing taxes to include TOPS, PPRTA, LART and others because they have served us well. I can't think of any new fees that are needed at this time, but again will evaluate the evidence. I will address storm water fees below.*

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

*I do not support constructing bike lanes on existing streets for the sole purpose of constructing bike lanes, but when citizens and neighborhoods complain about speeding, street racing, excessive traffic and other traffic safety issues, we must be responsive to their complaints. Road dieting is a proven means to address these types of safety concerns. For instance, while commuters complain about bike lanes on North Cascade, we received overwhelmingly positive support from the residents who shared that they, and their children, can now use their neighborhood sidewalks without fear, and that it has become more livable as a result of the reduction in lanes. The public process involved in North Cascade worked, despite the initial complaints of commuters, because the narrative was properly focused on neighborhood safety. I do not think the narrative was as properly focused with regard to the bike lanes on Research which were constructed before I was a member of Council, and because of this the traffic concerns on Research are still not addressed.*

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? Neighbors only object to projects in front of City Council after they have been approved by citizens (neighbors and homeowners) on The Planning Commission. By the time the projects come to Council, the neighborhood has been contacted, neighbors have been engaged, and their objections concerned and addressed.

*The real concern implied in this question is whether the processes set forth in City Code and Charter should be changed. Until it is, the process must be followed.*

*By the time appeals against rezoning come before Council, neighborhoods have been contacted and neighbors engaged, adjustments to the project have likely been made, final recommendations are made by City staff and have been reviewed approved by the citizens, homeowners and members of their own neighborhoods who make up The Planning Commission. After projects are vetted and approved following this vigorous review process, to include consideration of the opposition of neighbors, it should take a lot to convince me to substitute my judgment for that which has collectively emerged through the process, especially since my involvement follows a hearing of at most a few hours compared to the months and years invested by these stakeholders and experts (though I have been convinced to do so on occasion).*

*Optimal communication to neighbors at the outset, and neighborhood involvement throughout, this process is needed.*

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

*I am proud that, at my recommendation (and that of other Council members), our planning and budget departments have revised the fiscal impact analysis criteria for evaluating all new development, including infill projects, using the services of a private consultant. The new methodology will be presented to City Council and our citizens at a work session shortly after the election. It will allow us to better calculate the costs of, and accurately pay for, new and upgraded infrastructure and maintenance required as a result of new development.*

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

*As a former small business owner myself, I am aware that nothing raises about profitability and sustainability more than a lack of predictability of the business environment. Therefore, the most important thing we can do for our business community in the long-term is to get past the pandemic stage of this disease, and restore that sense of predictability. In the meantime, because unpredictability increases due to spikes in the infection rates which are very real, as I have seen first-hand as a front-line hospital chaplain, we can all support best support our business community by following the safety protocols in place to reduce and minimize the spread of the disease.*

*At the same time, Council must continue to be adaptable in providing whatever practical assistance it can. I have done this in approving sales tax rebates and suspending enforcement of regulations prohibiting and limiting outdoor dining and alcohol consumption, street side retail sales and curbside parking. These sorts of common sense responses to the limitations we are all encountering as a result of the disease need to continue until the pandemic is under control.*

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.

*In supporting placing the storm water enterprise fee on the ballot, I promised that money freed up in the general fund would be used to hire 120 police officers and 48 firefighters in order to bring staffing levels up to standard. The firefighters have been hired, and are well on our way to hiring the needed police officers. I remain committed to meeting that level.*

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?

*While it is regrettable that prior administrations and councils did not enforce our collective legal responsibilities resulting in the City being sued by the EPA, State of Colorado, City of Pueblo and others, and being exposed to potentially catastrophic civil liabilities and penalties, the settlement that has been negotiated is very favorable. While the settlement necessitates a modest increase in the fee, this was approved in the ballot measure passed by the voters, and to a large extent allows the City to pay for the construction of the storm water infrastructure we were obligated to construct before, but chose not to.*

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

*No. As I have consistently stated over the last four years, while the landscape for marijuana is changing throughout the nation and I will keep an open mind, the proponents of placing a recreational marijuana ballot initiative now have not convinced me that it is in the City's best interest to do so, as the claimed benefits have not been proven and are quite uncertain, while the potential costs are significant and present in larger cities in our state where recreational marijuana is sold.*

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?

*We have made great strides in addressing housing affordability/attainability over the last four years. Prior to 2018 the City never utilized its Public Activity Bonding authority. Council directed that projects be proposed through which the City would exercise this authority. Since 2018, five housing projects have been approved within City limits, and more are in the pipeline. Additionally, with the cooperation of the Regional Building Department, we have formalized a rapid response criteria program for affordable/attainable housing projects to ensure that builders will not lose money*

*waiting for inspections. We have also supported Springs Rescue Mission with \$500,000 yearly to assist it in providing homeless shelters and have directed CSU to establish a fairer tap fee matrix that reflects its actual expenses in extending service to infill versus green field developments. In the next four years I would like to: (1) create a permanent position to assist developers/builders in navigating the complex grant/bonding/loan and other process involved with attainable/affordable housing; (2) in public/private partnership create a more robust land bank that builders/developers can tap into for location where such housing can be built; (3) in public/private partnership create a self-sustaining seed fund so that builders/developers need not tie up their own money for the 2-3 years needed to apply for and close on the grants/bonds/loans; and, (4) review impact all fees at the in City and CSU and determine where we might be able to decrease regulatory costs for these construction projects.*

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?

*As a chaplain and front-line hospital worker, I have seen and experienced, first-hand, the pain, suffering and loss that individuals, families and our community has experienced over the past year. It is an experience I have brought, and will continue to bring, to my work as a member of City Council.*

*All too often we believe that decisions of our government should be made without consideration of the human costs and impacts, but this ignores our civic responsibilities to one another. While processes that we have agreed to apply and follow must be honored, and at times reconsidered and perhaps changed, I have never lost sight that in following these processes that are necessary for having an ordered and predictable society, I have made decisions that have impacted individuals and smaller groups. Despite this, I will always keep the dignity, honor and value of every person and group who appears in front of me foremost in mind, while being fair and just in applying the processes and criteria which we are all committed to follow as citizens of Colorado Springs. I thank you all for your support.*