

# Colorado Springs City Council Candidate Survey

Candidate name: Nancy Henjum

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?**

Accountability and fiscal responsibility in government are important in building and maintaining trust. Citizens have an absolute right to know that any revenues being collected are necessary and that we're getting good value from them. Increasing taxes or fees while recovering from a pandemic is a bad idea. A good approach is to make the specific case to voters about why any increase (or new tax or fee) is needed, how it would be implemented, and when it would sunset. The citizens of Colorado Springs have shown good judgment about supporting additional taxes – when asked – provided the need is justified and the process is transparent.

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

Bike lines and other multimodal transportation have a place in ConnectCOS and as a part of an integrated development and transportation plan for our city as it grows. Whether to eliminate or convert specific lanes of traffic depends on the roadway under consideration. The City has committed to becoming a Gold-Level Bicycle Friendly Community. As Olympic City USA, Colorado Springs is home to the U.S. Olympic Committee, USA Cycling, the Colorado Springs Olympic Training Center, and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Museum. We need to examine changes in transportation infrastructure from a systems-wide perspective as we consider how our city grows and how we ensure that our neighborhoods remain strong and we are aligned with our claim as Olympic City USA. We need increased bicycle-related education and encouragement efforts, stronger traffic enforcement, and better planning and evaluation processes are needed.

- 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?**

We need to listen to the views of our neighbors as new decisions are being considered. Both the challenges and opportunities of growth must be fairly shared across the city. If all we do is grow outward, we may unfairly burden older neighborhoods (such as those in my district) as it is expensive to provide services for an ever-expanding geographic footprint. To say that we won't permit any infill takes away a tool for providing affordable housing for younger families and those entering the market.

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

Infill projects and infrastructure will benefit the fabric of the entire City. Using our dollars efficiently and effectively is paramount. Finding ways to fairly distribute the cost is important. Developers and investors need to bear their fair share of the cost. I also think that we could benefit from looking at how other cities of our size are effectively balancing these important needs.

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

As we've done to some extent, the City needs to continue to reduce and delay taxes and fees for businesses until the recovery is on a firm footing. In addition, the City should look to expand partnerships such as that with Exponential Impact to provide emergency funding. The City could further assist local businesses in understanding and then leveraging the various State and Federal programs for relief. The City itself is not always in a position to be a direct provider of relief, but we can be a fully engaged partner.

**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.**

There are concerns about response times for emergency calls for service. I support staffing levels to provide for safe neighborhoods. I also believe the City should look into expanding our approach to Crisis Response, where trained professionals such as social workers, EMT's, etc., respond to calls related to mental illness, substance abuse, and the like. The STARS program in Denver is worth examining, for instance.

**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?**

An increase has already occurred, as per the EPA lawsuit mentioned. I think the City has made improvements in recently, including a good Drainage Criteria Manual and much monitoring. Because of our geography, the challenge of stormwater run-off is not going to go away.

**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 hear pros and cons on both sides of this argument. You can drive to the western edge of our City and purchase adult-use marijuana that you can then legally consume within the city limits, but that drive will cost the City \$8 million in taxes. Fiscal responsibility would suggest we capture those taxes. On the other hand, some argue that allowing the sale of recreational marijuana will discourage certain businesses or employers from locating here. Issues like these are related to individual liberty and freedom and should be addressed from a small government perspective. We need to let the voters decide.

**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?**

I support and will advance HomeCOS, the City's current vision for addressing housing. Although the City is not a direct provider, we must do everything we can to promote public-private partnership and incentivize

builders and developers in this area. It's important to note that some of the causes of our lack of affordable housing – e.g., increases in building costs, stagnant wages in the region – are not directly controlled by the City. The solutions will have to be system-wide and creative.

**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 have lived in my district for 30 years, and I know the neighborhoods of central Colorado Springs. I have been the Chief Operating Office for a public-private mental health partnership that managed federal Medicaid dollars and reinvested the savings to provide more and better services for those consumers. The partnership served a 43 of Colorado's 63 counties. I am now a small business owner who consults with leaders and companies of all sizes across many industry sectors. I have been a leader in a number of volunteer settings in Colorado Springs. I understand good governance, which is what every taxpayer should want and expect. I have seen first-hand how many of the challenges and opportunities a community faces are best addressed by healthy, creative partnerships between the public and private sectors. I understand how to bring people together to solve complex problems. During this critical juncture in our City's history, I believe my personal experience and professional expertise will serve the City well.