

Colorado Springs City Council Candidate Survey

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District: 3

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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?

The responsibility of local government and its "public servants" is to provide for the safety, security and well-being of its citizens as well as to plan prudent and smart growth. They have a fiduciary responsibility to expend the financial resources entrusted to them prudently and where the investment supports the greater good. It is too easy for "politicians" to forget their responsibilities and view tax revenue as a way to put their personal stamp on a community.

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

After talking with a great number of residents affected by the "road dieting", it was interesting to note that even those who agreed with the bike lanes were taken aback in that they were not given sufficient opportunity to state their positions either for or against. The consensus was that City Council acted on its own accord with the notion that they knew what was best for the community. Unfortunately, bike lane is barley use and the congestion in the Old North End has only gotten worse, raising community tensions pitting neighbor against neighbor. Had City Council openly listened to local constituents and heeded concerns, the results may have been different. This is a lesson on what not to do and I firmly oppose the elimination of motor vehicle traffic lanes.

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?

Colorado Springs is a victim of its own success and as such has a dearth of available housing i.e., there are only approximately 450 homes currently available in the MLS registry. This requires some hard analysis and decisions. That does not however imply that City Council can act with carte blanche with the notion that they "know what is best". Here too, the voice of the community must be heard and concerns taken into consideration. There are communities where zoning changes may make sense, but they should be derived with input from the affected community. To make city wide zoning changes defeats the ideal of smart growth.

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

Infrastructure planning is one of the primary responsibilities of City Council and should be prioritized above other beautification initiatives. One reason TABOR was passed a number of years ago, was the fact that state and local government felt they could spend taxpayer dollars on lower priority projects and then force taxpayers to pay even more taxes for those projects which should have been paid first. To paraphrase Ronald Reagan, we do not have a tax revenue problem, we have a spending problem. It is high time, community voices were heard and City Council serve those who elected them. Unfortunately, additional tax revenue may be required to meet the growing infrastructure needs, but should only be raised as a last resort.

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

As devastating as COVID has been on our community and nation, much of the destruction has been caused by government actions. While the objective may have been honorable, the implications are many businesses have been permanently shuttered. The best City Council can do, is to remove regulatory constraints to allow businesses to open-up quickly, rehire their employees and generate sales. Though for some it may be too late, we need to resuscitate those businesses that have a fighting chance and return our communities to a level of normalcy.

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.

Simply stated, this is incredulous! If the desire is the destruction of a community's social fabric, this is the way to do it. As stated above, it is local government's responsibility to provide for the safety, security and well-being of its citizens. I strongly oppose defunding of our police force. Our police have been under intense pressure to respond to the ever growing challenge that population spikes bring. The idea of social justice must start with respecting and adhering to the rule of law. Unfortunately, those who want to defund the police do not believe in either. Anarchy is not the answer to a civilized society.

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?

The stormwater lawsuits resulted from the fact that the city was focused on other issues than what was their mandate. This is simple mismanagement. To ask citizens to once again bail out past failures with even more taxes, especially since so many have been devastated by government's onerous and draconian measures stifling productivity is beyond the pale. During my term in City Council, I would hold the other members accountable for resource allocation and only vote to increase the fee as a last resort.

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 am vehemently opposed to recreational marijuana. This is absurd though the amount of money the marijuana industry is throwing for legalization, it is likely to pass in the current City Council.

When marijuana was legalized it was done so with the false promise that the black market would evaporate and revenue would go to schools. Both have proven to be abysmal failures. Now the argument is that we need to legalize recreational marijuana in Colorado Springs so that we can use the revenue to police current regulations. This would build upon previous failures.

It is also important to note that Colorado Springs is a military town and marijuana remains mutually exclusive to good military service. This includes not only our service members, but the government service and contract workers who support the various missions. For those who use marijuana, they self-select to NOT be able to participate in the high paying jobs that our military community brings and will be left behind with our prosperity. One of the reasons USSPACECOM left to Alabama was Colorado's position on marijuana. Legalization was a mistake and we are only just beginning to see horrific costs.

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?

It has been stated that "a rising tide, raises all boats". The key to our continued prosperity is to bring those high paying jobs that contribute to the high standard of living we enjoy. I do not think anyone would like to see housing prices drop significantly as that would mean Colorado Springs is dying.

At present, there are many regulations and legal constraints that inhibit an incentive to develop affordable/attainable housing, namely building defect tort precedence where if one unit is deemed to have flaws, the whole development is subject to legal risk. Since the home building business is based upon a risk/reward analysis, there is a disincentive to take the risk to meet affordable housing needs.

It was presented to me by a current member of City Council that it costs approximately \$30K more to build in the city limits than the county. The comment was made that the county needs to institute the same regulations as in the city to even the playing field. Instead, this highlights that the city is out of touch with constituent needs and desires.

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?

After numerous conversations with District 3 residents, it became clear that the majority felt that their voice on City Council was lost. It is my fervent desire to serve as that voice and retain the virtues that brought my family and me here, some 15 years ago.