

Colorado Springs City Council Candidate Survey

Candidate name: Randy Helms

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?

I am a conservative. Conservative principals normally oppose big government and bureaucracy. Government should only do the things that governments are meant to do. Things like public safety, roads and infrastructure. I would oppose new taxes/fees that are intended to increase the size of government or wander from the purpose of government.

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

I am against road-dieting on existing lanes especially on existing parkways and Blvds. I can support bike lanes if built into new roadways and they don't affect traffic and safety.

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?

Given the community need for affordable, actually all types of housing, I do support infill development, possible zoning changes, less red tape and regulation and possibly a moratorium on certain fees.

Addressing neighbors, neighborhood concerns about zoning changes, traffic issues, etc. should be a robust process but, sometimes the opposition comes from those that simply don't want any change.

There are legal avenues, ballot access opportunities should residents wish to continue to pursue their opposition after the Council has voted.

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

Depending on what infrastructure we are talking about, it is funded in several ways. Local infrastructure in new developments is paid for by the developer, ultimately the home buyer. Redevelopment and Urban renewal builds infrastructure in a combination of ways including incentives, business improvement districts, etc. Infrastructure is not and has not been a priority in our current make up of state government however, state highways, bridges etc. are funded by gas taxes, general fund, etc. and if the tax is collected - right or wrongly - it should be spent as promised.

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

I am keenly aware of the impacts of the pandemic. I support opening business, restaurants, etc. today. Especially with the vaccines in play this should not be "rocket science".

The business community, non-profits have stepped up and offered help to small business sometimes working in a public-private partnership. I support these efforts.

Incentivizing people to not go back to work with unemployment bonuses, etc. is not a good idea. In the long term it is not clear how destructive the ongoing government relief packages are - someone, you - me is going to have to pay for it in the end.

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.

I will never support defunding the police and I support increasing our police officer numbers. I also do not support the unionization of our first responders. We will hire and keep better officers without collective bargaining.

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?

As they say, that train already left the station as those increases were approved by City Council last week. It was a unanimous vote. Without all of the facts I am not certain what my position would be. I do know that I am not a fan of new taxes and fees unless approved by the voters. The City certainly had - has a serious issue with the lawsuits, etc. What's done can't be undone in this case where construction sites created polluted stormwater however, going forward I would work with my colleagues and City staff to ensure all development, building would adhere to the regulations that protect our environment.

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 oppose. I am a role model to the USAF Academy cadets we sponsor. I commanded men and women in uniform and marijuana is still illegal under the federal government. It would be hypocritical of me to support such a measure and at the same time tell our men and women serving our Nation "Not you."

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?

Through my research and interviews since I embarked on this race I have learned that things like the cost of lumber - a home "package" - to build a home has increased by over 24% since January of this year. I am a believer in creative solutions. Possible zoning changes, more infill development, less red tape and

regulation and possibly a moratorium on certain fees might be a recipe to produce more affordable housing options.

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 would like to emphasize the differences between me and my three opponents. I believe my district, District 2 deserves someone representing them that generally "mirrors" their values. District 2 is made up of people who are conservative - veterans, hardworking taxpayers. While I question some of the policies that have come from government as the result of COVID I don't believe that it is/was a hoax as does one opponent. Two of my opponent(s) the incumbent, and another who is a city employee support collective bargaining. These are not conservative principals.