

Colorado Springs City Council Candidate Survey

Candidate name: Jim Mason

District: 1

Website: <https://jimmasonforcitycouncil.com/>

Date: 3/10/21

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 support increasing and/or establishing taxes or fees, when the need is to enhance or improve safety and security provisions that are in the best interest of the Public. Of course, the decision for new and/or increased taxes or fees, require the vote of citizens.

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 eliminating motor vehicle traffic lanes in lieu of bicycle lanes, considering current needs and requirements. Now, if the bicycle traffic and/or there is new development, then, yes, bicycle lanes must be a component of the upgrade and street/road refresh. Bicycle lanes are a safety measure that will need to be managed in accordance with need and feasibility. Clearly, we need to provision for both as the need and opportunity present. It is not a 'one or the other' choice...we need both when and where it makes sense.

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?

No. Clearly, we must cease work until a solution can be brokered

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

We must work on the front-end with Developers to fix a shared cost for new and enhanced infrastructure to accompany the infill projects. Neither entity can bear the costs alone, without jeopardizing the project.

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

My basic response without a 'deep dive' is this: Council can work with City leadership to determine the feasibility of A). Halting or deferring financial burdens placed on small businesses. Actions to assist with

delaying payment of utilities, taxes, and licensing fees. These expenditures during periods of decreased revenue poses a significant threat to small businesses' abilities to remain open. And B). Council could request additional support from City Staff in providing aid to businesses applying for SBA loans. Research suggests many small businesses could use help in applying for relief, because the magnitude of the work exceeds the capacity of most businesses' administrative staff. To supplement businesses' efforts, Council could request the redeployment of City staff/Subject Matter Experts to provide technical assistance to business owners as they apply for SBA loans.

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 support increasing the number of Officers, increasing training opportunities, and providing updated equipment...based on the Chief's declaration of need. We should insist that our Officers are the best trained and resourced team we can field.

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?

If needed, of course. In the meantime, I need to know better what is the problem we are trying to fix. More importantly, we must enforce the standards, from start to finish.

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 selling recreational marijuana within Colorado Springs. I understand the revenue argument. I disagree that the potential dollars are worth nor can pay for the potential ill-effects. I think this question is less about money; rather it is more about ethics and a miscarriage of trust. I execute the will of the citizens to the best of my abilities. However, I personally and professionally oppose.

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 think the city should undertake an active role in partnering with Developers and associated stakeholders to directly increase the availability of affordable housing. I think a broad outline of a viable plan consists of two basic components: 1) Developed tax Incentive programs designed with the purpose of encouraging private developers to increase the supply of affordable housing; and 2) In concert with 1), we will need to deliberately pursue the private sector in forming Public and Private partnerships dedicated to increasing affordable housing numbers.

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 fiscally conservative.