

# 2014-2018 Strategic Plan



Jobs ➔ Transforming Government ➔ Building Community

Mayor's Office  
City of Colorado Springs  
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City of Colorado Springs

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## INTRODUCTION

Colorado Springs, a City of over 400,000 people, has grown into a place where people want to live, work and vacation, building on its foundations of natural beauty, hard-working individuals, a health and wellness-focused culture, and friendly, generous, community-oriented spirit.



Colorado Springs is unique – our proximity to outdoor amenities, focus on health, extensive parks, trails and open spaces, strong sense of community, together with a western heritage and military and Olympic legacy, defines Colorado Springs.



In the last five years, our community has faced difficult challenges - fires, flooding, economic downturns. However, the spirit of Colorado Springs, embodied by our sense of community, compassionate nature, and collaborative neighborhoods, keeps the City strong.

We recognize that the services we provide and the positive changes we strive for are enhanced through our partnerships within the community. Our volunteers, community groups, economic development partners, local businesses, and visitor's associations, as well as input from our citizens help to shape our strategies, our priorities and our services.

The 2014-2018 Strategic Plan prioritizes our services, determines resource allocation, and fosters the way we do business to further the goals of the community and build upon the City of Colorado Springs' high quality of life.

The Strategic Plan aims to drive economic growth through strategies that increase the job base and residential/living options in the City, enhance public safety through proven techniques and new, innovative approaches, and join community efforts to work together to maintain and improve upon our City's best assets – our parks, recreational amenities, entrepreneurial spirit and desire to help those in need.

Throughout the Strategic Plan, the City seeks to continually transform City government and City services through encouraging employees to find creative and innovative ways of accomplishing more within resource constraints, and leveraging technology and community partnerships to drive a higher performing City government.

The resources the City needs to improve the quality of life for all exist beyond the walls of City government. Only a collaborative community can build a stronger future for Colorado Springs. The goals, objectives, and strategies laid out in this plan seek to leverage Colorado Springs' community spirit and resources, to do just that – build a stronger community together!

## 2013 HIGHLIGHTS

*In 2013, the Mayor led the City's initiatives of **continuous improvement** of customer service, **innovation and reinvention** of core functions and **celebrating and connecting community**, through governmental and community partnerships.*

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF CUSTOMER SERVICE



- Launched Mobile App for Citizen Requests – GoCoSprings
- Opened New Helen Hunt Falls Visitor Center
- Created Online City Council District Look-up
- Instituted Real-time Bus Arrival and Departure Info
- Created Streets, Police, and Fire Flood Response Plans
- Launched enhanced “Colorado Springs Traffic Cam” webpage
- Conducted Proactive Debris Cleanup To Mitigate Flooding Risks



### INNOVATION AND REINVENTION OF CORE FUNCTIONS

- Invested ~ \$46 mill in Stormwater/Flood Mitigation (City & CSU)
- Xeriscaping at Airport to Save an Estimated \$120,000 Annually
- Extend Sidewalk Repairs through the Citizen Cost Share Program
- Initiated City Paid Internship Program
- Instituted Development Review Project Planner System
- Reduced Development Review Times from 6 to 4 Weeks
- Outsourced Fleet Maintenance (savings of ~ \$2 mill over 3 years)

#4 Most Business-Friendly City”  
– *CNNMoney, 2013*

### CELEBRATING AND CONNECTING COMMUNITY



- Launched Evening Bus Service
- Instituted “Sandbag Saturdays” & Flood Preparedness Meetings
- Launched Ticket to Success Program – Introducing Students to City Government
- Partnered with Health Organizations and Private Organizations to Conduct Clinic Days
- Partnered with REI and RMFI to Build Section 16 Trail
- Conducted Monthly Citizen Forums

## VISION AND MISSION

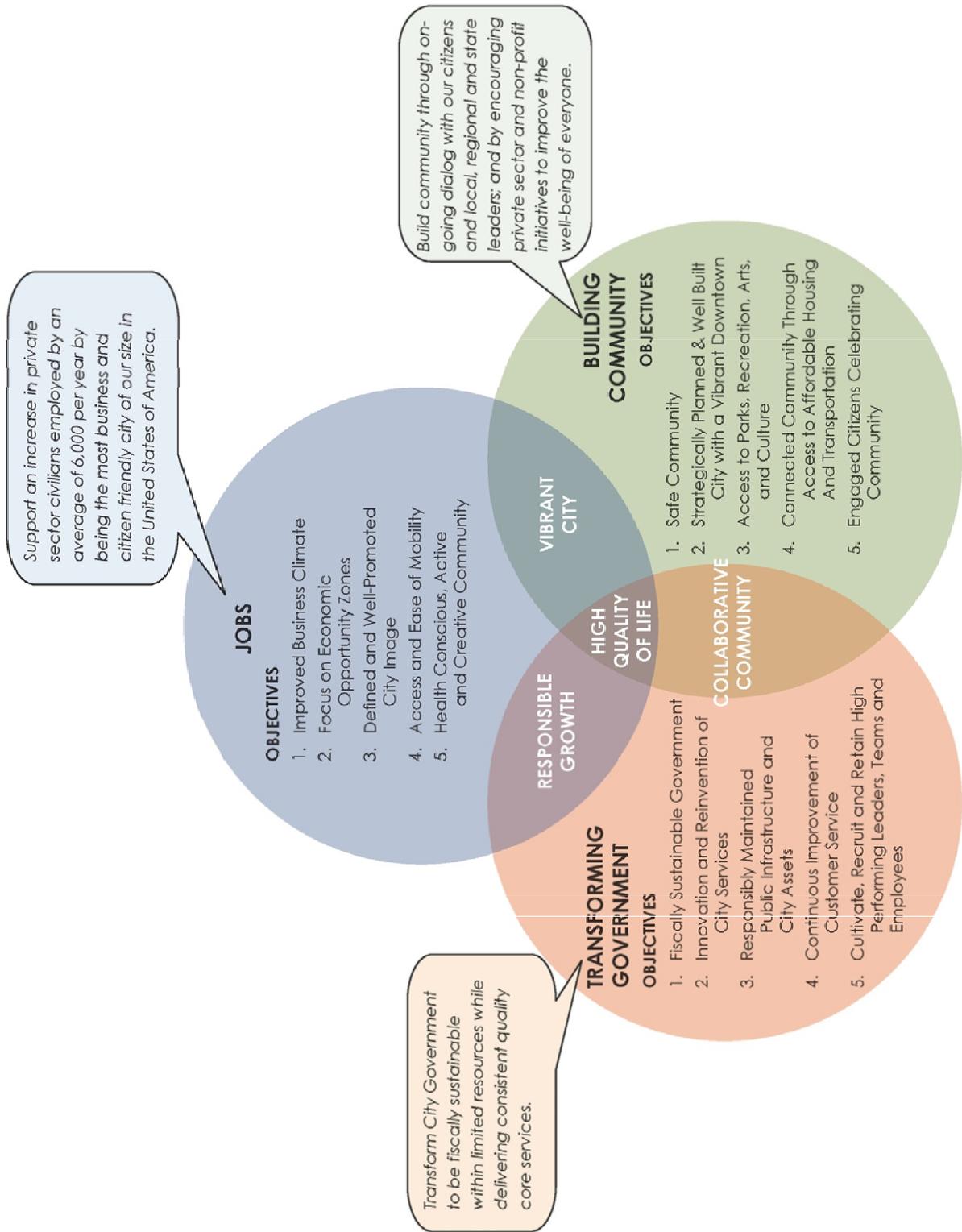
**Vision:** With America the Beautiful as our heritage, hard work as our foundation, and Western optimism as our guide, Colorado Springs will be a successful city where people love to live, work and vacation.

**Mission:** As stewards of the public trust, we will serve the people of Colorado Springs with core services effectively, efficiently and courteously with the wise use and management of our resources.



## ASSUMPTIONS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. A safe community remains the number one priority for the City.
2. Economic growth and the resulting increase in revenue growth will be the driving force to the City's long-term fiscal sustainability. Targeted, performance-based incentives and catalyst projects will spur economic growth. Commercial and residential infill will positively affect revenues and provide density needed for more efficient service delivery.
3. With the current combined revenue streams from all funds, and their prescribed uses, it will be daunting to achieve the level of public services the community desires unless revenues increase substantially or we can find ways to repurpose existing revenues and rethink how the City provides its services.
4. Colorado Springs' competitive advantages are in the City's stunning natural environment, advanced education opportunities, recreational amenities, history of health, wellness and active lifestyles, growing arts scene, strong ties to amateur and elite sport, and tradition of service to community and country. Preserving and enhancing the unique features of Colorado Springs will continue to make Colorado Springs an attractive destination for visitors, draw prospective employers and inspire growth of new industries.
5. All of our citizens and visitors are valued and will benefit from successful implementation of the strategic plan. The City must work diligently to build trust and engage citizens so that they become ambassadors. Working with citizens, business community leaders, employees and other governmental entities is essential to success.



## CATALYST PROJECTS

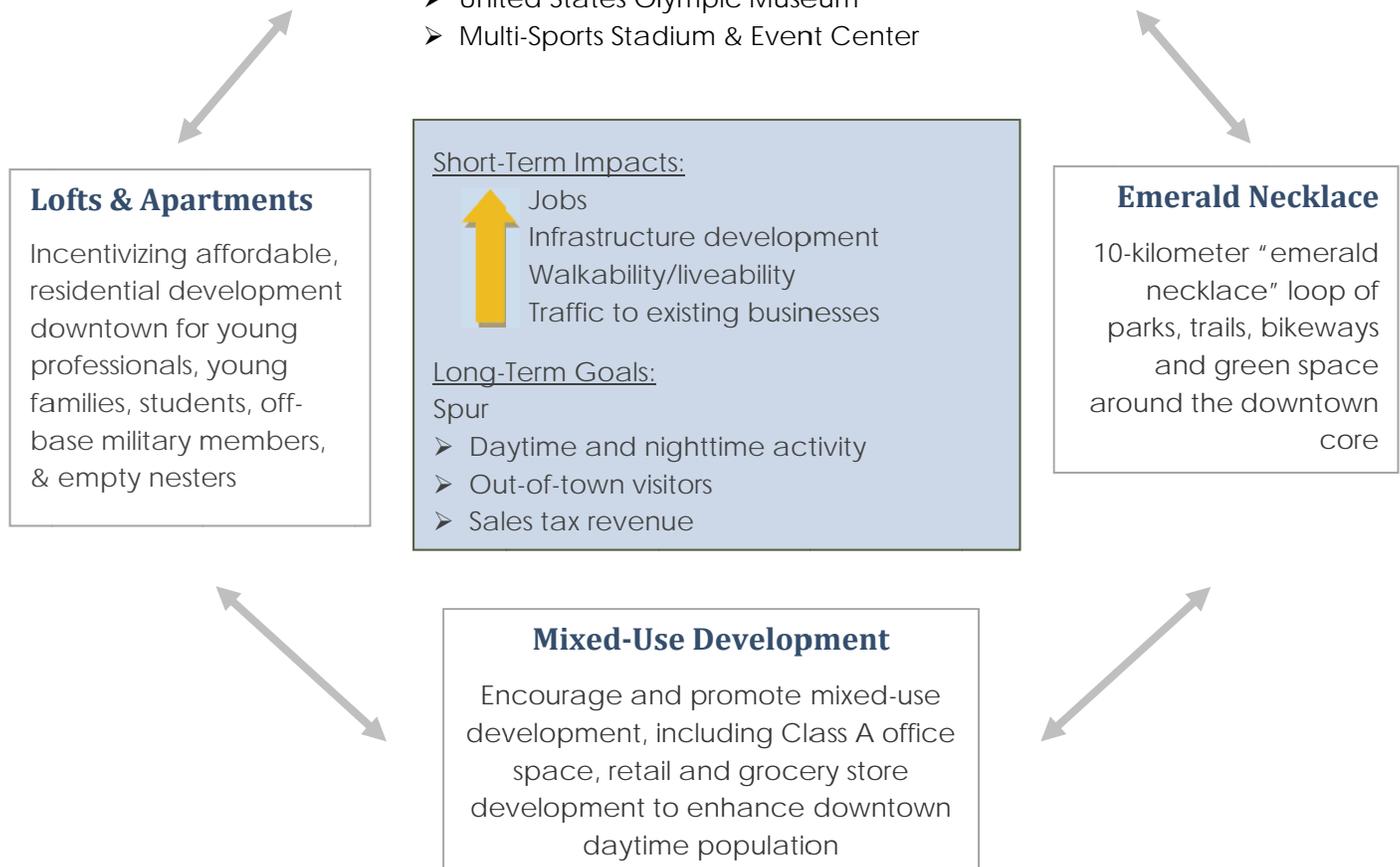
What projects stimulate further development, enhance the quality of life for all citizens, promote our surrounding natural beauty, build on our engaged community? What lays the foundation for the future of Colorado Springs?

### A VIBRANT, LIVEABLE, ACTIVE DOWNTOWN

#### ★★★★City for Champions★★★★

Downtown Initiatives:

- United States Olympic Museum
- Multi-Sports Stadium & Event Center



Colorado Spring’s greatest assets – parks, trails, our Olympic heritage, entrepreneurial spirit, and active, engaged citizens – can be leveraged to drive a more vibrant downtown. However, the four priority projects for downtown, shown above, depend on each other to drive the desired short-term impacts and long-term goals.

Through Economic Vitality initiatives, and partnering with local development agencies, developers, community groups, and business associations, the City will work to further these downtown priority projects that will cultivate a vibrant, walkable, active downtown.

## CATALYST PROJECTS (continued)

### Key Development Opportunities & Strategies

The City of Colorado Springs has a substantial amount of vacant land available and prime for development; to leverage these opportunities to generate economic growth and build community, the City has identified key areas and strategies for development

#### Key Opportunities for Development

<p><b><i>Airport Office Park</i></b></p> <p>Create an aeronautical zone to provide tax incentives for aviation industry growth, increasing jobs, airline traffic and driving business growth in the area</p>	<p><b><i>Banning Lewis Ranch</i></b></p> <p>Master Plan Banning Lewis Ranch to promote fiscally sustainable development with a job-housing balance including mixed use development, to create a liveable and walkable community</p>	<p><b><i>South Academy &amp; North Nevada Economic Opportunity Zones (EOZs)</i></b></p> <p>Apply EOZ task force recommendations, and work extensively with the community to determine job-generating strategies that build more cohesive, economically thriving quarters</p>
<p><b><i>Copper Ridge</i></b></p> <p>Promote high-end retail area on a regional, high-traffic corridor to provide a higher quality of life, stem sales tax leakage and increase jobs and further development in the area</p>	<p><b><i>Interquest Parkway Area</i></b></p> <p>Incentivize additional industrial park development to leverage recent growth; transportation connectivity and proximity to housing provides job-housing balance</p>	

#### The City's Approach to Infill

***Infill – Incentivizing Urban Villages & Live, Work, Play Communities***

Where appropriate, the City will seek to encourage development of Urban Villages or Live, Work, Play Communities in areas that are currently underdeveloped, by promoting:

- Medium density development
- Mixed-use zoning
- Utilization of existing infrastructure
- Expansion of existing trails, open spaces, parks
- Initiatives of entrepreneurs/new businesses, and creative arts

These development projects and concepts provide opportunities for the City to transform the City's sprawl into networks of communities, with a greater diversity in retail, entertainment and living options, building neighborhoods, creating more jobs, with liveable and walkable communities that enhance Colorado Springs as a desired place to live, work and vacation.

## CORE STRATEGIC PLAN

### Goal 1: Jobs



#### 1.1 *Improved Business Climate*

- A. Enhance and promote business retention and expansion through performance-based incentives, issue resolution and Rapid Response programs
- B. Ensure responsiveness, reasonable regulations, fees and rules related to business development while balancing competing interests
- C. Conduct an active local industry visitation program in support of existing employers
- D. Encourage local business development, startups and entrepreneurialism through collaboration with existing economic development partners including universities, incubators, business associations, and venture capital investors
- E. With input from the business community, create an online business hub for permits, applications and licenses to streamline processes and improve customer service

#### 1.2 *Focus on Economic Opportunity Zones (EOZ) (Downtown, North Nevada/UCCS Corridor, South Academy)*

- A. Establish a stakeholder task force to conduct SWOT analyses to determine impediments to redevelopment in Economic Opportunity Zones and develop strategies for mitigating these impediments
- B. With the stakeholder task force, craft a vision and redevelopment strategy for each EOZ and define specific outcomes
- C. Identify anchor projects that stimulate infill development and realize the vision in each EOZ
- D. Actively market and promote redevelopment of EOZ areas by reaching out to developer and broker communities
- E. Consider public and public-private funding options for implementing recommendations of the redevelopment strategy

#### 1.3 *Defined and Well-Promoted City Image*

- A. Support and contribute to CVB & Regional Business Alliance efforts to ensure consistent messaging through a multi-media marketing plan that highlights the City's amenities, natural resources, recreational opportunities and attractions
- B. Improve the City's overall first impression and appearance by reducing blight
- C. Promote City success stories by proactively reaching out to local newspaper and broadcast media and through social media

- D. Address aging and underutilized buildings and incentivize development efforts near our City's Gems and Gateways
- E. Improve streetscapes and maintenance and care of medians and rights-of-way, prioritizing the City's Gateway and Gem corridors

*1.4 Access and Ease of Mobility*

- A. Continue to develop and promote Colorado Springs airport as affordable, convenient, and the preferred choice for air travelers, with direct flights to cities across the United States
- B. Develop a long-term, multi-modal transportation plan (bike trail, bus, roads, etc) that connect key points of the City, attractions, jobs, housing and retail
- C. Capitalize on and market the City of Colorado Spring's proximity to statewide attractions (whitewater rafting, skiing, etc.)
- D. Enhance transportation corridors' aesthetics, road quality, and bike lane accessibility
- E. Collaborate with PPRTA and PPACG to maximize funding for transportation improvements

*1.5 Health Conscious, Active and Creative Community*

- A. Develop strategies to attract a health conscious, active and creative community
- B. Promote after-work events downtown, in conjunction with downtown associations and local businesses (for example, First Friday, Art Gallery Nights, and small concerts), as well as annual events which highlight an active community
- C. Promote City internship program to local colleges
- D. Capitalize on and publicize the City's national recognition of health conscious and active lifestyles
- E. Target marketing strategies to the health conscious, active and creative community by emphasizing the City's downtown activities, access to recreational, cultural and educational opportunities and as an emerging and creative City itself

## Goal 2: Transforming Government



### 2.1 *Fiscally Sustainable Government*

- A. Through the annual budget process, maximize the use of existing resources, and establish partnerships between City departments to overcome resource constraints
- B. Develop funding strategies to address the backlog of needs (capital, rolling stock, etc.)
- C. Inform citizens regarding current pension unfunded liabilities and champion pension reform
- D. Enhance zero-based/priority-based budgeting to further realize efficiencies
- E. Develop a five-year CIP program on a biennial basis

### 2.2 *Innovation and Reinvention of City Services*

- A. Form an Optimization Committee to employ private sector/non-governmental, as well as other successful city strategies to realize efficiencies, suggest alternative service delivery models, and drive employee ingenuity and career satisfaction
- B. Review the Urban/General Services model and determine feasibility of implementation
- C. Expand citizen access to services and information through mobile-enabled technologies
- D. Implement smart technologies to minimize waste
- E. Increase the number of documents available on the City website and enhance searchability to increase transparency and reduce CORA requests

### 2.3 *Responsibly Maintained Public Infrastructure and City Assets*

- A. Develop a plan to address ongoing and deferred maintenance of facilities and infrastructure, including implementation of a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan with citizen involvement
- B. Reassess use of City facilities/space to maximize utilization, eliminate ineffective space, and optimize utility usage
- C. Enhance infrastructure development standards to provide a high return on investment
- D. Renovate or develop infrastructure, roads and buildings, with a low-impact, low-energy approach to reduce long-term maintenance and operating costs
- E. Improve safety and security in City buildings

*2.4 Continuous Improvement of Customer Service*

- A. Develop customer service standards and train employees on customer service problem solving skills to align with merit pay system goals and employee recognition program
- B. Improve citizen access to City services and information through enhanced website tools, increased available information
- C. Develop a centralized citizen-information call system (i.e. 311)
- D. Convert applications to electronic format for easy customer/client access and develop website, real time customer feedback
- E. Implement City-wide business intelligence through performance dashboard technology

*2.5 Cultivate, Recruit, & Retain High Performing Leaders, Teams & Employees*

- A. Develop initial succession planning structure and program; encourage continuous leadership/career development training opportunities
- B. Establish a cross-departmental, creative solutions team to empower employees to recommend changes that create more efficient/effective services
- C. Increase regular and timely communication of short-term and long-term City strategies and ideas to employees
- D. Enhance soft benefits to employees to increase employee productivity and employee satisfaction
- E. Introduce the beginnings of a Talent Management approach, using talent cross-departmentally and maximizing existing resources; HR serves as facilitator and 'Talent Broker'—departments bring needs and HR looks inside first for development opportunities

## Goal 3: Building Community



### 3.1 *Safe Community*

- A. Improve citizen safety by reaching and maintaining the authorized and recommended level of personnel at Fire and Police, and increasing emergency preparedness for both staff and the community through emergency management training, planning and exercises
- B. Use innovative streetlight technology to increase public safety
- C. Enhance mutual aid relationships and interoperability among public safety agencies
- D. Allocate resources to address critical safety infrastructure needs (bridges, stormwater, fire station, etc.)
- E. Make targeted investments in declining neighborhoods to improve housing quality, increase business activity and employment, stimulating the creation of safer neighborhoods

### 3.2 *Strategically Planned and Well Built City with a Vibrant Downtown*

- A. Enhance sports and cultural activities downtown and stimulate private sector investment through implementation of the City for Champions Regional Tourism Act project to include a new United States Olympic Museum, Downtown Stadium and Event Center, UCCS Sports Medicine and Performance Center, and U.S. Air Force Academy Gateway at Falcon Stadium Visitors Center
- B. Analyze all successful city funding models to recommend and develop funding models for long-term capital improvements and revitalization projects
- C. Conduct a needs assessment of land uses and changing demographics to determine future development needs and implement strategies accordingly
- D. Improve public safety in and image of the downtown area
- E. Ensure that land use policies encourage high density and mixed-use development in downtown and foster high quality development citywide

### 3.3 *Access to Parks, Recreation, Arts and Culture*

- A. Develop a new Parks and Recreation System Masterplan, which will include accessibility, future development and funding strategies
- B. Develop a Parks-specific marketing plan, that increases communication to citizens and visitors on the variety of Park's amenities, highlighting historical significances
- C. Enhance connectivity between existing trails, parks, bike paths, historical sites, and City attractions

- D. Enhance the Public Art program to address funding, parameters, evaluation, selection and maintenance
- E. Continue to foster arts and culture through promoting creative industries, providing opportunities for local artists to display their works, and supporting entertainment events

*3.4 Connecting Community Through Access to Affordable Housing & Transportation*

- A. In partnership with the Continuum of Care's homeless assistance services, convene private and non-profit partners and homeless service providers to create a community plan for addressing homelessness
- B. Continue fair housing education, training and outreach, particularly among landlords
- C. Invest resources to increase the number of affordable housing units with a focus on serving the special needs of homeless, disabled, large families and elderly
- D. Strategically use grant funding and maintain healthy reserves to ensure long term sustainability of affordable transit services
- E. Expand medium and high density housing near transit in order to lower the combined cost of housing and transportation for households and better ensure long term sustainability of affordable transit services

*3.5 Engaged Citizens Celebrating Community*

- A. Broaden and expand coalitions around key topics and expand the City's use of social media to inform citizen's of City-wide and department-level projects and events and to receive real-time feedback
- B. Develop a new citizen's academy program to educate citizens on the array of City services and encourage emerging leaders to apply for seats on City advisory boards and committees
- C. Continue the Spirit of the Spring's Celebrate and Connect program to honor outstanding contributions of citizens and community leaders
- D. Create a new City-wide volunteer program to continue to expand volunteerism
- E. Enhance Spirit of the Springs program with local events that celebrate community

## STRATEGIC PLAN ROLES

*The City plays a vital role in shaping Colorado Springs' future; the resources, expertise, and community awareness that are essential to accomplishing the strategies laid out in this plan exist in this community, beyond just the walls of City government. The coordinated work of our citizens, existing economic development partners, local businesses, community groups, and regional associations and partners, as well as the City, builds a stronger community together.*



Recognizing this, the City and these partners will serve in one or more of the following five roles while implementing the Strategic Plan. As the City develops its Implementation Plan, the City will identify its role(s) for each individual strategy.

- Manager - lead implementation of the strategy through changes to policy and/or procedures, implementation/funding of programs, with partnership and support of stakeholders
- Convener - organize and bring together key stakeholders, funding sources, and interested parties to shape the strategy and create a plan for implementation that may or may not directly involve City resources
- Champion - advocate for policy and program changes that are not under the direct control of the City and proactively educate and advise citizens and other stakeholders of how existing policies/practices/programs affect City operations and citizens' quality of life
- Catalyst - lead the implementation of key projects/programs or implement changes to City practices/policies that seek to further the long-term goals of the strategy and act as a driver of change
- Strategic Partner - assist the business community, business associations, and other local and regional partners in furthering goals that require collaboration of many entities from different sectors to affect change

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