

BACKGROUND

The City Council of Commerce City is committed to creating a *Quality Community for a Lifetime*, establishing bi-annual goals that provide policy direction to staff for administrative work activities.

The purpose of the city's 2014 policy statement is to formalize city positions on legislation expected to be considered by the Colorado General Assembly. The city offers the policy statement as a guideline to legislators for reference when considering legislation impacting the City of Commerce City. Strategic, targeted, and/or abbreviated versions of the information contained in this document will also be created throughout the year for use in further legislative communications.

The policy statement was developed in advance of the convening of the 2014 Colorado General Assembly. Consequently, it does not address state legislation by bill number. Instead it describes the underlying interest the city has on specific issues, providing clear direction and a framework for staff to develop positions on key legislative issues of impact to the City of Commerce City. Once approved by the city council, this document will serve as a guide for establishing a position on issues of importance that requires quick action once the legislative session begins. Council may revisit the city's legislative priorities, as a body or through its legislative subcommittee.

REPRESENTATION

As a member of the Colorado Municipal League (CML), Commerce City relies on the organization's dedicated advocacy team to provide reliable information on legislative issues and their impact on Colorado's cities, towns and their residents, consistent with CML's approved [policy statement](#). The city's director of communications and government affairs serves as the liaison for state legislative items. Occasionally, a specific issue of importance to Commerce City requires additional legislative support at the capital.

MAJOR POLICY AREAS

Home Rule and Local Control

The citizens of Commerce City adopted a Home Rule Charter in 1970, which establishes the power of local self-government to the city pursuant to the Constitution of the State of Colorado. As such, Commerce City has the responsibility and authority to adopt rules and regulations that govern the operation of our community in the interest of its citizens. The City believes that home rule authority increases the effectiveness and efficiency of local government services, enhancing the quality of life in the community and the value provided to local taxpayers.

Therefore, the City of Commerce City:

- Supports legislative efforts to strengthen home rule authority of municipal governments.
- Expects state legislators to uphold and support home rule and Colorado's tradition of local control.

- Opposes efforts to diminish municipal home rule authority and flexibility.
- Opposes legislation that mandates state intervention in matters of local concern, especially when that intervention unnecessarily or adversely affects the City's ability to manage these matters pursuant to its home rule authority.

State Mandates

Programs and regulations mandated by the state of Colorado have the potential to stretch the city's financial resources. If additional costs brought about by mandated programs or regulations are not paid by the state government, they can have a direct negative impact on the city budget, preventing Commerce City from meeting the needs of residents and achieving our strategic priorities.

Therefore, the City of Commerce City:

- Supports mandates (consistent with TABOR) that reimburse our city for services provided.
- Opposes unfunded mandates that impose unfair financial burdens on Commerce City and its citizens.

Sales and Use Tax

Commerce City levies, administers and collects its own sales and use tax under its home rule authority. Sales and use tax revenue is the primary source of funding for city operations and services, comprising more than 80 percent of general fund revenues. Statewide, municipalities generate more than \$5 in these taxes to every \$1 of property taxes. Sales and use taxes have enabled municipalities to fund public services and improvements and keep municipal property taxes relatively low. Appropriate actions at federal, state and local levels should preserve or enhance these local revenues.

Therefore, Commerce City will:

- Support legislation that maintains local control over imposition, collection and administration of sales and use taxes.
- Support legislation that allows state and local governments to require businesses to collect state and local sales and use taxes on remote sales.
- Support voluntary, cooperative efforts among Colorado municipalities to standardize sales and use tax practices and utilize technology for the convenience of taxpayers, the business community, and municipalities.
- Oppose legislation that preempts local authority to impose and collect sales and use taxes.
- Oppose legislation that grants jurisdictions other than the State, cities, and counties the authority to impose sales or use taxes.

Urban Renewal

The Commerce City Urban Renewal Authority (CCURA) identifies and establishes slum and blighted areas for redevelopment. The CCURA has successfully used tax increment financing for public private partnerships to start improving areas such as:

- City Plaza
- Derby District
- Mile High Greyhound Park
- Victory Crossing

From property acquisition and assembly, assistance in financing infrastructure and utility improvements needed to adequately serve the property, to preparing the property for redevelopment and providing relocation assistance – all are critical tools necessary for the ultimate success of these URAs. The responsible use of these tools is essential for Commerce City to maximize quality development and redevelopment of properties in the community.

Therefore, Commerce City:

- Supports legislation to enable cooperative urban renewal projects between multiple jurisdictions.
- Support legislation that provides for an opportunity to reset the 25 year tax increment financing (TIF) clock.
- Opposes legislation that would unreasonably restrict the use of tax increment financing or eminent domain for redevelopment projects.
- Opposes any legislation that reduces our ability to successfully develop or redevelop in our community.

Economic Development

Commerce City strives to develop a balanced and vibrant city economy consistent with its stated goals. Whether it's maintaining primary employers, expanding its retail base or encouraging local business expansion, the city recognizes the importance of a healthy economic climate to its overall quality of life. Commerce City advocates for and collaborates with legislators, government entities and other municipalities to encourage the creation of jobs in our City and for our residents.

Therefore, Commerce City will:

- Support the development of a statewide economic development strategy that addresses issues of business climate and economic direction at the State level but allows for local control of economic development.

- Support appropriate State tax policies and incentive programs, including enterprise zones, business incentive agreements, or other legislative initiatives, that encourage business expansion and retention through primary job creation, investment in capital equipment, and employer facility development.
- Oppose any state action that would conversely affect our City's ability to attract new or sustain economic development.

Transportation

Commerce City believes the movement of goods and people is vital to the continued economic success of the state and Coloradoans quality of life. The state legislature must be willing to make significant investment to maintain and improve the state's multi-modal transportation network to preserve these benefits. Adjacent to six major highways, Denver International Airport, two railroads, and two new commuter rail lines, effective transportation is equally important to the success of the city's economy. The city has demonstrated a willingness to partner on large-scale infrastructure projects, such as State Highway 2, but is against efforts to pass along additional State roadway construction or maintenance responsibilities to local governments without increased and adequate funds to meet these additional responsibilities.

Therefore, Commerce City:

- Supports increased funds to finance pressing surface transportation needs as long as an equitable portion of new revenues is returned to cities and towns.
- Supports greater flexibility and increased revenues for multi-modal transportation systems.
- Supports limitations on "off-the-top" diversions from the Highway Users Tax Fund.
- Supports close cooperation among Colorado Department of Transportation, counties, municipalities and interested stakeholders in improving Colorado's multi-modal transportation system.
- Supports legislation to enhance transportation funding equity within the Denver Metropolitan Region.
- Supports state and federal investments in the North Metro Commuter Rail Line, Interstate 270, and north I-25 managed lanes projects.

Municipal development and land use

Commerce City constantly works to achieve its comprehensive plan, to build a sustainable community. The City believes that local control with land use planning contributes greatly to the achievement of this goal and the overall quality of life in the city.

Commerce City will support local control and determination of local land use issues. In general, the City will support state laws and policies that encourage new residential, commercial and

industrial development to occur within municipalities such as our City. Conversely we will oppose efforts to restrict municipal authority to annex territory as well as delegation of our land use authority to state agencies or preemption of municipal land use controls, and any restrictions on urban renewal authorities.

Therefore, the City of Commerce City:

- Supports legislation that removes barriers to local land use planning and land development regulation.
- Supports appropriate legislation that facilitates the creation of Transit-Oriented Developments (TOD).
- Supports legislation to enable cooperative urban renewal projects between multiple jurisdictions.
- Opposes legislation that prescribes comprehensive land use and other community planning at the State level.
- Opposes legislation that would inappropriately limit local government authority to impose growth impact fees.
- Opposes legislation that would unreasonably restrict the use of tax increment financing or eminent domain for redevelopment projects.

Public Safety

Having a safe and secure community is one of the city council goals. The city is working diligently to provide a safe environment, protecting the lives and property of the citizens of Commerce City. The role of the Police Department is to enforce the law in a fair and impartial manner, recognizing both the statutory and judicial limitations of police authority and the constitutional rights of all persons.

Therefore, Commerce City will:

- Support legislation that ensures flexibility for municipalities when implementing Federal and State criminal justice programs.
- Support legislation providing enhanced sentences for criminal offenses committed by proven members of gangs.
- Support legislation that maintains and strengthens the provision of community-based mediation and other alternative dispute resolution services.
- Support legislation that protects Senior Citizens from criminal exploitation.
- Support legislation that protects society against Identity (ID) Theft.
- Support legislation that protects juveniles from sexual predators on the internet.

- Support legislation that protects the rights of animals.
- Opposes legislation that inappropriately transfers immigration and illegal alien enforcement responsibilities from the Federal government to local government and diverts local law enforcement resources from other priorities.
- Opposes legislation that compromises officers' and the public's safety.

Education

Commerce City believes an effective education system supplies our municipality with an educated, well-trained community and workforce, which will allow existing businesses to expand and attract new business investment to our city. With two school districts and a state-charter school, the city believes education is a communitywide value and the most effective programs are partnerships among our educational institutions, local stakeholders, and local governments.

Specifically, Commerce City:

- Supports the full funding of K-12 education consistent with required levels.
- Supports state and local policies and initiatives that encourage greater early learning, K-12, higher education, workforce training opportunities, and lifelong learning opportunities.
- Supports access to information and resources that help parents and caregivers give students the greatest chances to learn and grow in safe and healthy ways.
- Supports state initiatives that enhance creative and innovative partnership opportunities with businesses and educational institutions, including shared facilities, school resource officers, and enhanced programming.
- Supports funding of education in the state in a balanced manner which takes into consideration the needs of all sectors of the economy and yet not at the expense of municipal revenues.