



2015

Commerce City State Legislative Policy Statement

City of Commerce City
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Commerce City, CO 80022

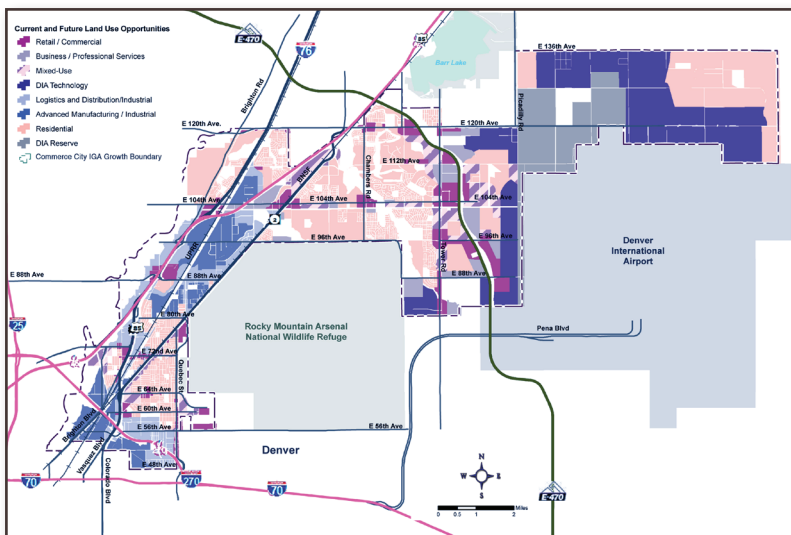
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ABOUT

COMMERCE CITY



As Colorado's fourth-fastest growing municipality, Commerce City is redefining itself for the next generation, building on historic values of community, industry, agriculture and family. Vibrant and culturally-diverse, Hispanics comprise 47 percent of Commerce City's population of 49,799, with a median resident age of 31 and average household income of \$69,308. With the nation's largest urban wildlife refuge, 25 miles of trails, a championship golf course, one of the country's largest soccer complexes, the home of the MLS Champion Colorado Rapids and 700 acres of open space and parks, Commerce City offers a *Quality Community for a Lifetime*.



Nearly 1,600 companies call Commerce City home, ranging from international and national headquarters to small businesses and entrepreneurs. Centrally located along Colorado's bustling Front Range and just eight miles north of downtown Denver, Commerce City provides direct access to six major highways, Denver International Airport, two railroads Peña Boulevard and two new commuter rail lines. Businesses and residents alike appreciate being less than 10 minutes from DIA's main terminal or downtown Denver.

Commerce City Fast Facts

- 2014 population: 49,799
- 2019 population: 67,392 (projected)
- Size: 41-sq.mi.; 64-sq.mi. at buildout
- Daytime employment: 59,273 employees
- Education: 75% have high school diploma or higher
- Target Industries:
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Energy
 - Business & Professional Services
 - Logistics & Distribution
 - Retail/Hospitality/Leisure
 - DIA Technology
- Median home price: \$189,019
- Homeownership rate: 70%

PROGRESSIVE

GOVERNANCE



Incorporated in 1952, Commerce City is a home-rule municipality with a council-manager form of government. The city's vision is a "Quality Community for a Lifetime" and the government exists to:

- Provide municipal services and programs valued by our citizens,
- Plan and develop a unified, sustainable community; and
- Enhance the quality of life in our community by or through: economic diversity and development, unique leisure activities and opportunities and developing a quality physical environment.

An elected City Council establishes the city's vision, sets annual policy goals and enacts laws that govern our citizens. The nine-member body include a mayor, a council member for each of the city's four geographic wards and four at-large members. The mayor selects a councilperson to serve as the mayor pro tem.

City Council's Goals:

- Develop a balanced and vibrant city economy
- Ensure a financially-sound city government
- Develop and maintain the public infrastructure
- Preserve and nurture a quality community
- Encourage community involvement, communication and trust

The city's annual 2015-16 budget is \$133 million, with 80 percent of the general fund derived from sales and use tax. Known as a business-friendly community, Commerce City does not have a head tax and its 3.28 property tax mill levy is one of the lowest in the state.

Over the next four years, Commerce City will implement the largest capital improvement program in its history, completing five new projects by Jan. 1, 2019:

- Widening of Tower Road from 80th to 103rd avenues
- A recreation center at Second Creek
- An outdoor leisure pool at Pioneer Park
- Three neighborhood parks at Fronterra, Turnberry and Villages at Buffalo Run East
- Additions to existing recreation center



This voter-approved, \$137 million program is funded by a dedicated, one percent tax for construction, operations and maintenance of these and future new recreation road and parks projects.

2015 LEGISLATIVE

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Commerce City's 2015 legislative principles serve as a guide for the city in developing positions on any forthcoming state legislation, consistent with council's stated vision and goals. The document also serves as a reference for elected representatives when considering legislation that may impact the City of Commerce City.

These legislative principles describe the underlying interest Commerce City has on specific issues, providing clear direction and a framework for staff to develop positions on legislation that can impact the city. Council may revisit the city's legislative priorities, as a body or through its legislative committee. Strategic, targeted, and/or abbreviated versions of the information contained in this document also will be created throughout the year for use in further legislative communications.

REPRESENTATION

As a member of the Colorado Municipal League, Commerce City relies on the organization's advocacy team to provide reliable information on legislative issues and their impact on Colorado's cities, towns and their residents. The city's director of communications and government affairs serves as staff liaison for federal and state government relations. Commerce City occasionally contracts issue-specific legislative support at the General Assembly.

SPECIFIC

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Commerce City has identified several specific priorities important to the community:

Owner-occupied, multifamily housing

Increasing the availability of owner-occupied, multifamily housing units is consistent with the city's comprehensive plan and overall vision of building a vibrant and diverse community. Today, condominium projects only account for 2% of new residential construction in metro Denver. Commerce City has not seen a new condominium/multi-family project since 2008.

In Commerce City, the housing market makeup is 15,452 households, with home ownership of 10,102 or 65.4%. The average age of the city's nearly 50,000 residents is 31 years, and 47 percent of the population is Hispanic. No multifamily projects were built in Commerce City last year, despite having hundreds of acres of zoned multifamily parcels ready to go. Developers are seeking to down-zone these acres which only increase the likelihood of sprawl. The number of single family permits continues to rise, with 384 units approved last year – the highest since 2007.

These activities are inconsistent with Commerce City's long-range vision of mixed residential housing opportunities and near-term infill redevelopment plans in blighted areas and a new commuter rail station. The city believes reasonable changes can be made to the existing construction defects law to encourage new for sale multi-family developments, fostering conditions that will encourage builders to construct more diverse and affordable housing options within the community.

Urban Renewal & Tax Increment Financing

The Commerce City Urban Renewal Authority (CCURA) prevents slum conditions and remedies blight through redevelopment that leverages tax increment financing (TIF) with private and public partners. This benefits all taxing entities in the long run, creating vibrant infill spaces that offer a sense of community. Commerce City currently has six urban renewal areas in various stages of development:

- City Plaza shopping center, including King Soopers located at 62nd and Vasquez
- Victory Crossing, located at 60th Avenue and Quebec Street, containing Dick's Sporting Goods Park, the Commerce City Civic Center, the Refuge and soccer field complex
- The Derby District, 72nd Place and Monaco Street
- The former Mile High Greyhound Park, a 65-acre mixed use redevelopment and home to new Suncor Boys & Girls Club
- The new commuter rail station at 72nd and Colorado Boulevard.

The work of the CCURA on these projects is far from finished. From property acquisition and assembly to public infrastructure and utility improvements, the ability to responsibly use and customize URA and TIF tools to best fit the needs of each specific project is essential for CCURA's ability to maximize its goals and achieve its vision.



The CCURA has successfully used tax increment financing for public private partnerships to start improving areas such as the Derby District, former Mile High Greyhound Park and Victory Crossing. But we are

far from finished. 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.

Public Safety Tools: Photo Red Light Cameras

In 2009, Commerce City approved red-light safety cameras to create safer streets for the public and curb dangerous red-light running. In August 2010, the city placed its only red light camera into service at the U.S. 85/SH 2/60th Avenue/Parkway Drive intersection. The seven-legged intersection is one of the worst in the metro area, with an average daily traffic count of 56,000 vehicles. It's obsolete design and high volume of semi-truck traffic makes traditional enforcement nearly impossible, as the risk to pursue violators poses an unreasonable safety risk to the officer. We've seen the number of violations, accidents and injury accidents decline, indicating there are fewer incidents when cars are running the red light, making the intersection safer to the general public. By using the photo red light system at the city's worst intersection, the police department has reduced accidents and more importantly, alter driver behavior to prevent such incidents from happening. That's why it is critical for Commerce City to have the ability to identify and use appropriate tools such as photo red light cameras to address local public safety concerns.

GUIDING

LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES

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 the 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.

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.

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.

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.

Transportation

Commerce City believes the movement of goods and people is vital to the continued economic success of the state and Coloradans quality of life. Federal and state officials must be willing to make significant investment to maintain and improve Colorado's multimodal 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 and Interstate 270, 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.

Municipal development and land use

Commerce City constantly works to achieve its comprehensive plan, to build a sustainable community. The City believes that local land

use planning contributes greatly to the achievement of this goal and the overall quality of life in the city. In general, the City supports laws and policies that encourage new residential, commercial and industrial development to occur within municipalities such as our City. Conversely we 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.

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.

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 community-wide value and the most effective programs are partnerships among our educational institutions, local stakeholders and local governments.

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