



To: City Council

From: Jason Rogers, CMO

Subject: DC Talking Points

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Advocacy Talking Points for Commerce City Councilmembers

These talking points incorporate critical analysis of key internal documents: the DC Advocacy Meeting Notes, the Commerce City Federal Legislative Booklet, and the RMA Info Paper. By highlighting critical funding and policy needs, Councilmembers can present a well-rounded message to federal officials and agencies.

1. ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARSENAL (RMA) FUNDING AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION

Under the new RMA Program Manager (replacing retired manager Charlie Scharmann), the Army continues key restoration projects, including renovation of the administrative building (completion expected in 2025) and planning for the future Consolidated Groundwater Treatment Plant (CGTP), with the construction contract scheduled for award in 2027.

- Advocate for robust federal appropriations ensuring Commerce City does not bear unexpected costs for environmental cleanup, especially as the CGTP becomes operational (projected 2028-29). Emphasize the importance of protecting community groundwater quality without shifting financial burdens to local ratepayers.
- Highlight the recently installed transmission pipeline (fall 2024) that will support the CGTP once online, underscoring the need for continued federal collaboration and funding to finalize the larger-scale system.
- Stress how ongoing Army cost-saving efforts (e.g., consolidating staff in Building 129) demonstrate a commitment to efficiency but require stable funding to maintain restoration momentum.
- Recognize and promote Navarro's Community Commitment Grants Program in Adams 14 schools, which fosters STEM education related to environmental stewardship at RMA.

2. PFAS AND 1,4-DIOXANE CONTAMINATION AND WATER TREATMENT

- Emphasize the critical funding gap (\$15-20M) needed to complete the District's PFAS treatment works. Advocate that federal funds, including Bipartisan Infrastructure Law resources, be allocated to close the shortfall so ratepayers are not unduly burdened.
- Urge the EPA to address the longstanding 1,4-Dioxane contamination from the Chemical Sales Company Superfund site, seeking a comprehensive federal cleanup plan and firm timelines for remediation.
- Reference the District's planned water treatment facility construction starting April 2024, with completion by December 2026, noting the urgent need for continued Build America/Buy America (BABA) waivers and related federal support to mitigate cost escalations.

- Underscore Commerce City’s alignment with federal health advisory levels and highlights proactive measures taken (e.g., shutting off contaminated wells, GAC treatment improvements, external water purchases) to safeguard public health.
- 3. SUNCOR REFINERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS**
- Address the community’s health and environmental justice concerns by advocating for stricter federal enforcement and transparent reporting on emissions and compliance data.
 - Request that EPA closely monitor Suncor’s operations, focusing on air quality impacts, risk mitigation, and enforcement actions tied to repeated violations or exceedances.
 - Highlight Suncor’s role as a major employer in Commerce City and seek federal support for collaborative workforce development programs that strengthen local ties without compromising environmental standards.
- 4. TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**
- Solicit federal transportation grants and discretionary funding to advance critical Commerce City projects, including major arterials (I-270, US 85, 88th Avenue) and rail crossing improvements.
 - Emphasize the negative effects of train blockages, particularly on public safety response times and residential neighborhoods. Advocate for dedicated federal funding for grade separation, quiet zones, and other rail safety measures, particularly at locations that will be studied as part of the CIP project for railroad at grade crossing elimination—96th Ave and 104th Ave crossings with both BNSF and UPRR.
 - Highlight the need for continued investment in multimodal solutions (transit, micro-transit, pedestrian improvements) to accommodate the city’s rapid growth and reduce traffic congestion.
- 5. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**
- Advocate for continued or expanded federal funding (e.g., Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) to support technical and trade skill training. Stress the importance of alternative career pathways for Commerce City’s youth and unemployed adults.
 - Partner with local schools, trades, and employers (including Suncor) to create hands-on programs that address industry needs (e.g., welding, electrical, water treatment operations), thereby boosting employment prospects.
 - Request flexible federal grant programs for job placement assistance, apprenticeship initiatives, and upskilling to ensure the local workforce remains competitive.
 - What funding is available or discussions taking place pertaining to the increase of AI/automation and the future of the workforce in Commerce City.
- 6. HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
- Underscore the ongoing importance of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) in addressing Commerce City’s affordable housing stock, infrastructure improvements, and social services.
 - Advocate for expanded HUD involvement and faster responsiveness to local needs, ensuring that CDBG allocations remain robust and continue fueling revitalization efforts.
 - Stress the city’s diverse demographics and the need for equitable housing opportunities, aligning federal funds with Commerce City’s growth trajectory.

7. PUBLIC HEALTH, FOOD SECURITY, AND SOCIAL SERVICES

- Oppose reductions to SNAP, Medicaid, and other social safety net programs. Emphasize how cuts would disproportionately affect historically underserved neighborhoods in Commerce City.
- Highlight the city’s ongoing efforts to improve food access, including future farmers’ markets, local partnerships, and community education. Seek federal resources to support these initiatives.
- Advocate for stable or increased funding for vital public health infrastructure, especially in communities facing cumulative impacts from industry and environmental hazards.
- Advocate for continued funding for free and reduced lunch for Title 1 schools in Commerce City. Cutting funding would negatively impact students residing in Commerce City.

8. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY PRIORITIES

- Protect Commerce City’s home rule authority from federal preemption, particularly in areas such as telecommunications siting, environmental permitting, and local land-use decisions.
- Encourage improvements to federal processes for awarding grants, refining data metrics to better reflect Commerce City’s unique demographic, economic, and environmental challenges.

NEXT STEPS FOR COUNCILMEMBERS

- Highlight pressing funding shortfalls and regulatory hurdles during meetings with congressional offices and federal agencies.
- Use data and personal stories from Commerce City to underscore the real-world impact of federal programs on residents’ health, environment, and quality of life.
- Where possible, build bipartisan support by showcasing the city’s proactive measures (e.g., PFAS mitigation, workforce training) and emphasizing shared economic and community benefits.

CONCLUSION:

With continued federal investment and collaboration, Commerce City can bolster vital infrastructure, address environmental challenges, and ensure a higher quality of life for residents. By highlighting the distinct needs of our community—ranging from water treatment to workforce development—Councilmembers can advocate effectively for robust federal support, ensuring Commerce City remains a “Quality Community for a Lifetime.”