



2016

State Legislative Issues Guide

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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. The city's vibrant and culturally diverse population grew 225 percent in the last 15 years to 51,762; 47 percent of which are Hispanic.



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 722 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.





With nearly 12 square miles of available land directly bordering the airport, the city's comprehensive plan aligns with the vision of an Aerotropolis, fueled by aviation-focused businesses and related enterprises. Commerce City's E-470 corridor is a major catalyst and could accommodate three to four times the amount of commercial development found in the Denver Tech Center. With less than a 10 minute drive to DIA's main terminal, Commerce City is the perfect home to any business that benefits from being steps away from a global airport.

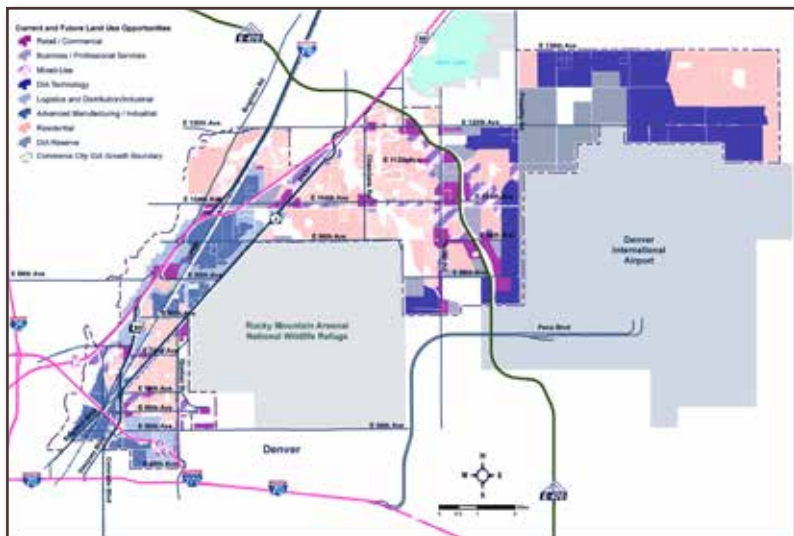
Commerce City Fast Facts

- 2015 population: 51,762
- 2035 Projected Population: 71,600
- Size of Incorporated Area: 34.72 square miles; 61+ at complete build out
- Daytime employment: 59,273 employees
- Target Industries:
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Energy
 - Business & Professional Services
 - Logistics & Distribution
 - Retail/Hospitality/Leisure
 - DIA Technology

PROGRESSIVE

GOVERNANCE

Incorporated in 1952, Commerce City is a home-rule municipality with a council-manager form of government. An elected City Council establishes the city's vision, sets annual policy goals and enacts laws that govern our citizens. The nine-member body includes a mayor, a council member for each of the city's four geographic wards and four at-large council members. The mayor selects a council person to serve as mayor pro tem.



The city's vision is one of a Quality Community for a Lifetime. As a municipality, its mission is to provide excellent public services and customer experiences by anticipating needs, embracing diversity, and fostering relationships to sustain a growing and vibrant community.

The city's 2016 total budget is \$81,914,496, which is divided into 14 different funds. Approximately 61 percent of the general fund is 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.

City Council's Goals

- Develop a balanced and vibrant economy to improve socioeconomic status
- Ensure a financially-sound city government to maintain or improve levels of service
- Develop and maintain public infrastructure to improve community appearance and encourage private investment
- Preserve and nurture a quality community to improve resident health and safety
- Engage the public to encourage community involvement, communication and to build trust



The new Suncor Boys & Girls Club will serve 1,000 Commerce City youth annually. Not only did the city donate 2.5 acres at the former Mile High Greyhound Park redevelopment for the standalone facility, it provides an annual investment in operations.

FIVE PROJECTS

FIVE YEARS

In 2013, voters approved a dedicated 1% sales and use tax to fund the city's largest capital improvement program in its history, committing to complete five projects by Jan. 1, 2019:

- Widening of Tower Road from 80th to 103rd avenues
- A new recreation center near 112th Avenue and Highway 2
- An outdoor leisure pool at Pioneer Park
- Three neighborhood parks at Fronterra, Turnberry and Villages at Buffalo Run East
- Additions to existing recreation center



The new pool – Paradise Island at Pioneer Park – opened July 2015 and the Fronterra Neighborhood Park was completed in August. The remaining projects are all underway, with construction expected in 2016 at the remaining neighborhood parks and Tower Road.



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 account for only 3.4% of new residential construction in metro Denver and most of those are luxury units above \$400,000.

Commerce City had not seen a new condominium/multifamily project since 2008 – 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 has risen, with 353 units approved last year. 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. That's why city council unanimously adopted Ordinance 2060, to encourage more diverse housing options, fostering conditions that will encourage builders to construct more diverse and affordable housing options within the community.

Since adoption, the city received and approved market-rate plans for 33 townhomes and 77 apartments in the Belle Creek neighborhood. Local solutions alone won't provide businesses with the certainty necessary to expand construction. As such, we hope the General Assembly will continue to find a statewide solution that implements reasonable changes to the construction defects law that balances homeowner rights with business interests.

Photo Red Light Cameras

In 2009, Commerce City approved a red-light safety camera program 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 2160th 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.

Since implementation, the city has seen the number of violations, property accidents and injury accidents decline, indicating there are fewer incidents when cars are running the red light and making the intersection safer to the general public. By using the photo red light system at the city's worst intersection, the police department reduced accidents and more importantly, altered driver behavior to prevent such incidents from happening. That's why it is critical for Commerce City to continue to have the ability to identify and use appropriate tools such as photo red light cameras to address local public safety concerns.

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:

- The Derby District, 72nd Place and Monaco Street
- The former Mile High Greyhound Park, a 65-acre mixed use redevelopment and home to the new Suncor Boys & Girls Club
- The new commuter rail station at 72nd and Colorado Boulevard.
- 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

CCURA has demonstrated responsible use of TIF within these blighted areas to date. Yet the work of the Authority on these projects is far from finished. From property acquisition and assembly to public infrastructure and utility



improvements, the ability to use and customize these 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 city is committed to working within the parameters of HB 15-1348 but has also identified ambiguities associated with TABOR and project implementation that should be clarified through the Governor's working group and subsequent clean-up legislation. This will allow Commerce City to maximize quality redevelopment of blighted areas within our community.

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 61 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, while still seeking opportunities to streamline or provide business certainty across municipalities.

Economic Development

Commerce City strives to develop a balanced and vibrant city economy to improve the socioeconomic status of our residents. 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 are 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. The city has made significant strides to implement a strategic policing program that accurately reflects the diversity of our community and provides equitable service to all constituents. Within this context, the city supports legislation that enables local decision-making on public safety services.

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 government. The city supports continued state funding of local school districts, finding opportunities to address the negative factor and eliminating further cuts as a result of TABOR.

Oil & Gas Operations

Colorado is well-known for its natural resources and history of oil and gas exploration. Like other local governments, Commerce City strives to balance the needs of industry with municipal growth and development. The city's land development code and the city's participation in the state local government designee program offer a layered approach to protect the interests of the community and the rights of private developers. The city is supportive of rules and legislation that maintains its home rule authority to regulate oil and gas development, expands communication and notification, and codifies use of best management practices to mitigate operator impacts.

Healthy Eating & Active Living (HEAL)

As a LiveWell HEAL community, Commerce City supports local, state and federal policies that improve access to physical activity and healthy food. Making the healthy choice the easy choice is essential to addressing Colorado's adult and childhood obesity epidemic, a clear toll on both our health and economy. The state spent \$1.637 billion treating diseases and conditions related to obesity in 2009, with further costs to businesses for lost productivity and absenteeism. Commerce City's coordinated and collaborative approach to HEAL policies and initiatives supports legislation that encourages an active community, promotes healthy work places, increases healthy food access and improves resident perceptions of safety and security.



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