

Office of the Clerk and Recorder

Strategic Plan 2021–2022



OFFICE OF THE CLERK AND RECORDER | HON. PAUL D. LÓPEZ

CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

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Message from the Clerk & Recorder



A strategic plan is so much more than a blueprint for the future. It is a statement of the ways we see our work evolving, improving, and growing in uncertain times. This strategic plan is a vision that takes the vital work of our office from the current state into the world of the possible.

The work of creating a plan like this and committing to it is critical as we navigate a world in which the only constant is change. I am confident that the dedicated staff at the Office of the Clerk and Recorder will realize the goals stated in this plan, and in so doing provide even better service to our residents, business partners, and each other.

Our goals are simple but ambitious: to better engage our employees, to bolster the public's confidence in Denver's election process, to engage constituents and encourage civic fluency, and to ensure that our constituents are getting what they need from our office in the best and most expedient ways possible.

This plan outlines a roadmap for achieving these goals, but in the end, the only way we reach our destination is through the hard work and commitment of public servants. The next few years will undoubtedly present challenges for us as we make progress on this plan, but I have no doubts that the team will innovate and persevere as we navigate those challenges together. The past few years have shown that when we are presented with adversity, we will innovate and collaborate to get the job done.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul López". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Hon. Paul D. López
Denver Clerk and Recorder
Office of the Clerk and Recorder

Mission

To provide constituent-friendly processes that are efficient and transparent, records that are easy to access, and elections that are accurate, secure and convenient for voters.

Vision

To be regarded as the most constituent-centric and trusted clerk & recorder team in the state of Colorado.

Values

1. **Collaboration:** We are dedicated to a constructive, team-oriented environment, gathering varied perspectives, sharing knowledge, and building effective partnerships with key stakeholders.
2. **Continuous Improvement:** We strive for operational excellence through the ongoing development of the staff and the organization.
3. **Innovation:** We encourage creative and critical thinking in the development of technology services and solutions.
4. **People:** We listen to, respect, and care for constituents, staff, vendors, internal agencies, and one another, both professionally and personally.
5. **Service:** We strive to provide excellent service by being consistent, agile, reliable, and accessible to all.
6. **Transparency:** We leverage open communications and thoughtful business processes to be accountable in our interactions and our work.
7. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** We are commitment to prioritizing equity and eliminating racial disparities in our policies, budgets, decision-making, and daily work. We foster internal and external partnerships with community-based organizations and other institutions who promote and encourage access to and participation in elections, marriages, recordings, and other business functions.

As public servants, we have a collective responsibility to proactively reduce or eliminate barriers to the services we provide. Our office supports and partners with the Office of Social Equity and Inclusion to enhance diversity and inclusion in our mission.

History and Statutory Definition of the Office

Denver split from Arapahoe County and became the City and County of Denver in 1902. The statutory impact of this change was defined in the 1904 charter, which outlined how the new City and County of Denver would administer state law. This charter defined the position of county clerk as a mayoral appointee, with the Office of the Clerk and Recorder functioning as an executive office under the mayor.



Early Denver voters at a polling place. Image courtesy Denver Public Library

Under this structure, the position of the Denver Clerk and Recorder performed the duties of City Clerk as defined by the charter and code of ordinances, as well as executing state laws defined in the Colorado constitution and statutes (except the registration of motor vehicles).

Denver elections were conducted by the Denver Election Commission: an independent agency over which the mayor and City Council had no direct control or authority, and two out of the three Election Commissioners were independently elected by Denver voters. Beginning June 1, 1919, the mayor appointed the clerk and recorder to serve as the third commissioner on the

Election Commission¹. Together, the trio managed the conduct of elections for the City and County of Denver, until 2007.

On January 30, 2007, the independent Office of Clerk and Recorder was created by a vote of the people at a special election². At this election, the people approved an amendment to the Denver charter calling for the direct election of the clerk and recorder, defining the powers and duties of the clerk and recorder; including the power to conduct elections; and repealing provisions related to the Denver Election Commission.

The state constitution gives the City and County of Denver power to designate, through its charter, the officers who execute state law at the city level³. The Constitution also gives the city the power to create municipal offices and define the terms for those who hold municipal offices and administer local elections.⁴

Today, the clerk and recorder exercises all the powers, and performs all the duties required, of the city clerk as defined in the charter and ordinances of the City and County of Denver. This includes keeping record of the proceedings of City Council, the custody of the Seal of the City and County of Denver, keeping official indemnity or security bonds, recording public documents not required by other offices, and overseeing campaign finance records. The clerk and recorder is the *ex officio* recorder of deeds of the city and county of Denver⁵, the county officer who issues marriage license certificates⁶, and the public trustee who administers foreclosure actions and releases of deed of trust⁷

The clerk also attests all public instruments and official acts of the mayor, or acting mayor, and all instruments requiring the seal of the City and County of Denver, by signature and the seal of the city and county; and certifies under the clerk's hand and the seal of the city such original documents, records and papers in clerk's office.

Today, the Office of the Clerk and Recorder is proud to serve the citizens of Denver with cutting-edge technology and measures that ensure both safety and statutory compliance. The office has implemented remote methods for recording and marriages and civil unions, as well as providing a national model for voting by mail. The office has made more than 11 million public records available online, providing contact-free, 24-hour-a-day access to vital public information. Our office looks forward to the future as we find even more opportunities to provide accessible, transparent, and exemplary service to the people of the City and County of Denver.

¹ Section 2.8.1 of the 2002 Revised Charter of the City and County of Denver, Corrected 5-19-2002.

² Ord. No. 851-06, § 1, 12-26-06, elec. 1-30-07

³ Article XX, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Colorado.

⁴ Article XX, Section 6 of the Constitution of the State of Colorado.

⁵ Article XIX, Section 8 of the Constitution of the State of Colorado.

⁶ Section 14-2-106, Colo. Rev. Stat.

⁷ Section 37-7-101, Colo. Rev. Stat.

Elected Clerk and Recorders

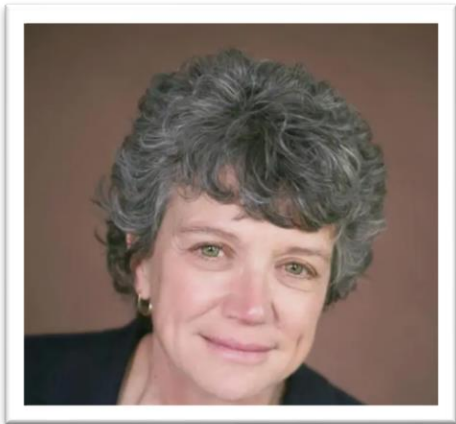
**Honorable Stephanie O'Malley
(2007-2011)**



**Honorable Paul D. Lopez
(2019-present)**



**Honorable Debra Johnson
(2011-2019)**



Division and Department Summaries

By charter, Denver's Office of the Clerk and Recorder is composed of the City Clerk, County Recorder, Public Trustee and Chief Elections Official. The work of the office is divided as follows:

Denver Elections Division



The Elections Division is responsible for conducting federal, state, city and county of Denver, and district elections in a fair, accurate, accessible and transparent manner. The division is also charged with maintaining accurate voter registration and election records.

The division is comprised of the Elections Administration, Operations, and Voter Services Departments, in addition to in-house data architects and business operations specialists.

Records and Public Trustee, City Clerk Division

The Records and Public Trustee Division is comprised of the Recordings and Marriages, Public Trustee, and City Clerk Departments. Recordings and Marriages is responsible for all recording services for the City and County of Denver as well as issuing marriages and civil union licenses.

Public Trustee Department



The Public Trustee Department has two main responsibilities:

1. Administering foreclosures according to the law and selling homes at auction when necessary, and
2. Executing releases of deeds of trust, which are necessary to prove in public record that mortgage liens against a property have been extinguished.

The department also serves the residents of Denver by providing information to homeowners, lenders, lien holders, title companies, and the general public regarding these responsibilities. Providing this information reduces filing errors, improves efficiency and transparency of process, and notifies homeowners of their rights during foreclosure, which can help homeowners stay in their homes.

City Clerk



The City Clerk Department administers the city's campaign finance laws, registration of lobbyists, and coordinates the disclosure of ethics, gifts, and financial information. The department maintains legislative records, city contracts, agency rules and regulations, and other municipal records. It ensures public records are preserved and available online or in-person for public inspection.

Administration and Operations Division



The Deputy Clerk and Recorder has, in situations where the clerk and recorder is unavailable, the same authorities of the clerk and recorder and may also attest to and file any emergency acts of the mayor. The Deputy Clerk and Recorder serves as the Chief of Staff and supports and advises the performance and compliance of the daily workings of the office's divisions and departments including direct oversight of agencywide finance, accounting, and operations support services. The records management department responds to all Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) requests that the office receives from the public and keeps all oaths of office.

Administration



The Administration Division is comprised of the Public Affairs Department (formerly Communications and Civic Engagement), Finance, and Operations and Technology Departments as well as the Office of the Deputy Clerk and Recorder.

Public Affairs



The Public Affairs Department works to build the brand of the Office of Clerk and Recorder, internally and externally and implements the clerk and recorder's legislative and governmental relations strategies.

The team creates external communications and engagement materials, manages social media platforms, develops internal communications tools to help develop shared brand identity, edits and produces the annual report and other reports as needed, serves as the office's media and public information contact, coordinates elections communications, and manages the office's websites. The engagement team educates, engages, and energizes Denver residents.

The team works within Denver's communities to deliver information about the Office of the Clerk and Recorder, including voter education and registration, foreclosure, city clerk activities, and marriage and recording processes.

Finance and Accounting, Administration and Operations, and Legal and Regulatory Compliance



The Finance and Accounting, Administration and Operations, and Legal and Regulatory compliance units provide support to all divisions and departments to coordinate service delivery, elevate constituent experience, and enhance operational and technology needs.

The Finance and Accounting department oversees budget, fiscal and accounting support services.

The Administration and Operations unit is responsible for the strategy, planning, management, and maintenance of agency operations and technology hardware and software infrastructure. The team provides hardware and software application support and end-user support, as well as ongoing upgrades and enhancements.

The Legal and Regulatory Compliance Unit provides full compliance support for the agency's legal and regulatory compliance needs.

Introduction.

One of the most important responsibilities we have, as public servants is to demonstrate a superior level of effort and commitment to quality service in meeting constituent expectations of our office. Whether a person wants to vote in elections, get married, record a document, file or respond to a foreclosure, or get copies of public documents, our goal is to be regarded as the most trusted and constituent-facing clerk and recorder team in the state of Colorado. The functions of the Office of the Clerk and Recorder touch, among other things, the right to vote, the right to marry, and the right to hold property. Our office is the cornerstone of Denver government offices.

This strategic vision will serve as a tool for continued investments in staff development, service improvement, and constituent engagement. It is a guide to consider new community partnerships, business process improvements, and program evaluations. It is a privilege to offer this strategic plan identifying the clerk and recorder's vision for the future for constituents, the community, and our staff.

Our strategic goals will guide our work to deliver accessible, efficient, and transparent services by engaging our constituents and empowering our employees. Our trained, courteous, professional staff serve the public in happy times and in difficult times. Our staff is the backbone of the agency.

Summary of Strategic Priorities

The six strategic priorities are:

1. Constituent Experience
2. Public confidence in Elections
3. Public Affairs
4. Workforce Development
5. Operational Excellence
6. Diversity & Inclusion

Strategic Priority 1 – Constituent Experience.

Goal 1: Increase feedback from constituents

- i. Conduct a survey of employees, internal and external stakeholders to obtain feedback on current service delivery and to obtain future-state recommendations. Collect and analyze stakeholder/constituent feedback from website response forms and interviews and incorporate findings into future-state recommendations.

Goal 2: Adopt best practices for improving constituent experience

- i. To improve the current services and identify proposed future-state recommendations, we will leverage technology to facilitate greater integration of recording and marriage functions, thereby improving overall constituent experience.
- ii. To enhance efficiency of daily business transactions and reduce burdens of unintegrated city software systems, we will streamline accounting and fiscal data processing functions with new technology, thereby improving overall constituent experience.

Goal 3: Set, communicate, and use constituent service metrics and standards

- i. To communicate and use constituent service metrics, we will redesign and implement measurable performance metrics for front facing functions.
- ii. Take a lead on improving the recording team’s collaboration and positive communications to improve overall team’s performance by 10%. Implement a training program by end of 2022. Training will include statutory requirements to ensure the recordings team is all on the same page and is empowered with knowledge and confidence to answer questions without second guessing.

Goal 4: Streamline methods of collecting, updating and publishing constituent facing data to illustrate the services we provide and the agency’s historical data

- i. Work with department managers to identify ways to easily maintain and update the data that best represents their individual departments.

- ii. Work with the technology team to improve current BI dashboard data collection methods and improve the dashboard's search functions.
- iii. Work with communications and the technology teams to publish a simple summary of the agency's activity on the agency's external website as well as providing a link to the BI Dashboard itself.

Strategic Priority 2 – Public Confidence in Elections

Maintain public confidence in how Denver conducts elections. Continuous process improvement and enhancements of the voting experience with voter-centric service delivery.

Goal 1: Propose changes and provide impact statements to City Council to correct inconsistencies with military and overseas ballot mailing deadlines in municipal elections in charter

- i. Create impact statements for options proposed by charter Review Committee.
- ii. Work with legal counsel to draft proposed ordinance and changes to charter.
- iii. Present proposed changes to City Council.

Goal 2: Efficiently reprecinct all City and County of Denver election precincts based on census data and Independent Redistricting Commission's district boundaries.

- i. Identify and resolve precinct conflicts.
- ii. Propose options to City Council.
- iii. Reprecinct all election precincts within the City and County of Denver.

Goal 3: Promote and continue to conduct Confined Voter Program

- i. Work with engagement to promote Confined Voter Program.
- ii. Work with other counties to help them implement the process.
- iii. Conduct confided voter registration and voting.

Goal 4: Obtain, build out, and implement use of Voter Coach for voter registration and voting purposes.

- i. Complete build out of the Voter Coach.
- ii. Use voter coach for voter registration at National Registration Day events and other approved voter registration events (i.e. MLB All-Star Weekend).
- iii. Use voter coach as satellite voting location.

Goal 5: Implement the Konnech / PollChief Election Judge Management System (EJMS)

- i. Ensure transfer / upload of historical data from legacy system(s).
- ii. Beta test with election judge users before live use during November coordinated election.

Goal 6: Ensure the safety of all voters and election workers by offering a safe voting experience.

- i. Re-implement 2020 COVID procedures, including curbside voting options.
- ii. Facilitate proof of vaccination process for election judges.

Strategic Priority 3 – Public Affairs

Goal 1: Constituent engagement

- i. Communicating and engaging residents regarding the functions of the Office of the Clerk and Recorder through an equity and inclusion lens.

Goal 2: Civic participation

- i. Proactive communication and outreach to Denver residents across 78 neighborhoods to increase civic participation in elections and promote greater awareness of recording, marriage, and foreclosure services.

Goal 3: Partnerships

- i. Build and maintain internal and external partnerships and authentic relationships to inform and engage residents about elections, foreclosure, and other office functions.

Goal 4: Improve Access to our services to residents

- i. Working with Public Affairs to design and implement an in-person outreach program.
- ii. Providing a simpler constituent interface to our division that is multi-lingual through the website.

Strategic Priority 4 – Workforce Development.

Goal 1: Create an even more efficient and thoroughly trained workforce

- i. Providing training and hands-on classwork to employees on new processes and technology in use today.
- ii. Provide refresher training to employees on all facets of the public trustee duties.
- iii. Explore the efficacy of cross-training staff from other divisions on Public Trustee duties.
- iv. Reduce operating silos by enhancing the understanding of roles and responsibilities and increasing knowledge of what each division and department is mandated with doing under state and local laws.

Goal 2: Strengthening diversity, inclusion and equity in our workforce

- i. Foster an inclusive workplace culture and promote equitable hiring, retention, and promotion practices.
- ii. Establish strong leadership to facilitate productive conversations among staff and management to boldly center diversity, inclusion, and equity in actions involving policies, budgets, and decision-making.

Goal 3: Investments in all agency professions

- i. Develop and implement comprehensive workforce planning and analysis.

Strategic Priority 5: Operational Excellence.

Goal 1: Improving in-person, virtual, and contact-free service options

- i. Create and maintain innovative process for virtual appointments for marriage and civil union certificates.
- ii. Secure change in state statute for virtual marriage and civil union appointments for marriage certificates.
- iii. Leverage technology for virtual appointment calendars and in-person services.
- iv. Maintain flexibility to pivot quickly between appointment-based service options and walk-in services while maintaining a safe and healthy office environment.

Goal 2: Records

- v. Make investments in equipment and technology for digitization, indexing, and preservation of records. Continued focus on consolidation and improvement of physical storage facilities for long-term preservation.

Goal 3: Innovations

- vi. Identify and pilot technology for single-user eRecording.
- vii. Implement user-friendly tool on website for property owners to monitor property transactions recorded with the Denver Clerk and Recorder. Continued development of other tools to enhance options for the public to monitor property filings.
- viii. Automate marriage application signatory process by adding electronic signatures for applicants and staff.

Goal 4: Move toward a modernized compliance vision and strategy embedded across the organization

- ix. Support divisions and departments in meeting increased demands on business operations by anticipating compliance gaps, and tailoring training efforts to minimize gaps in knowledge, role duplications, and quality assurance.

- x. Establish and implement compliance methodologies to evaluate, remediate, and stabilize core compliance structures through continuous training programs and execution policies and procedures.
- xi. Establish a framework to monitor and adjust compliance resource allocation across divisions and departments.
- xii. Adopt a critical analysis approach to interpretation of statutory and regulatory language for impact on marginalized communities and make recommendations for statutory language changes if appropriate.

Strategic Priority 6 – Diversity & Inclusion.

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Mission and Vision Statement

The Office of the Clerk and Recorder is committed to addressing issues of diversity, promoting diversity programs, providing guidance to create a more equitable, accessible, safe, welcoming, and inclusive government and community. We value diversity and inclusion and drive innovation by leveraging the talents of the agency's diverse workforce and stakeholders to best serve all constituents. We welcome all who seek to do business with us and join our workforce.

Empower, support, and engage staff to strengthen the services provided by the Office of the Clerk and Recorder.

Goal 1: Strengthening diversity, inclusion and equity in our operations and services

- i. Establish strong leadership to facilitate productive conversations among staff and management to boldly center diversity, inclusion, and equity in actions involving policies, budgets, and decision-making.

Appendix

Appendix – Selected Laws

- i. Article VIII of the Denver Charter, entitled “Clerk and Recorder”. [ARTICLE VIII. - CLERK AND RECORDER | Code of Ordinances | Denver, CO | Municode Library](#)
- i. Text of 1916 charter provision creating the Office of the Clerk and Recorder as published in the 1960 Charter:

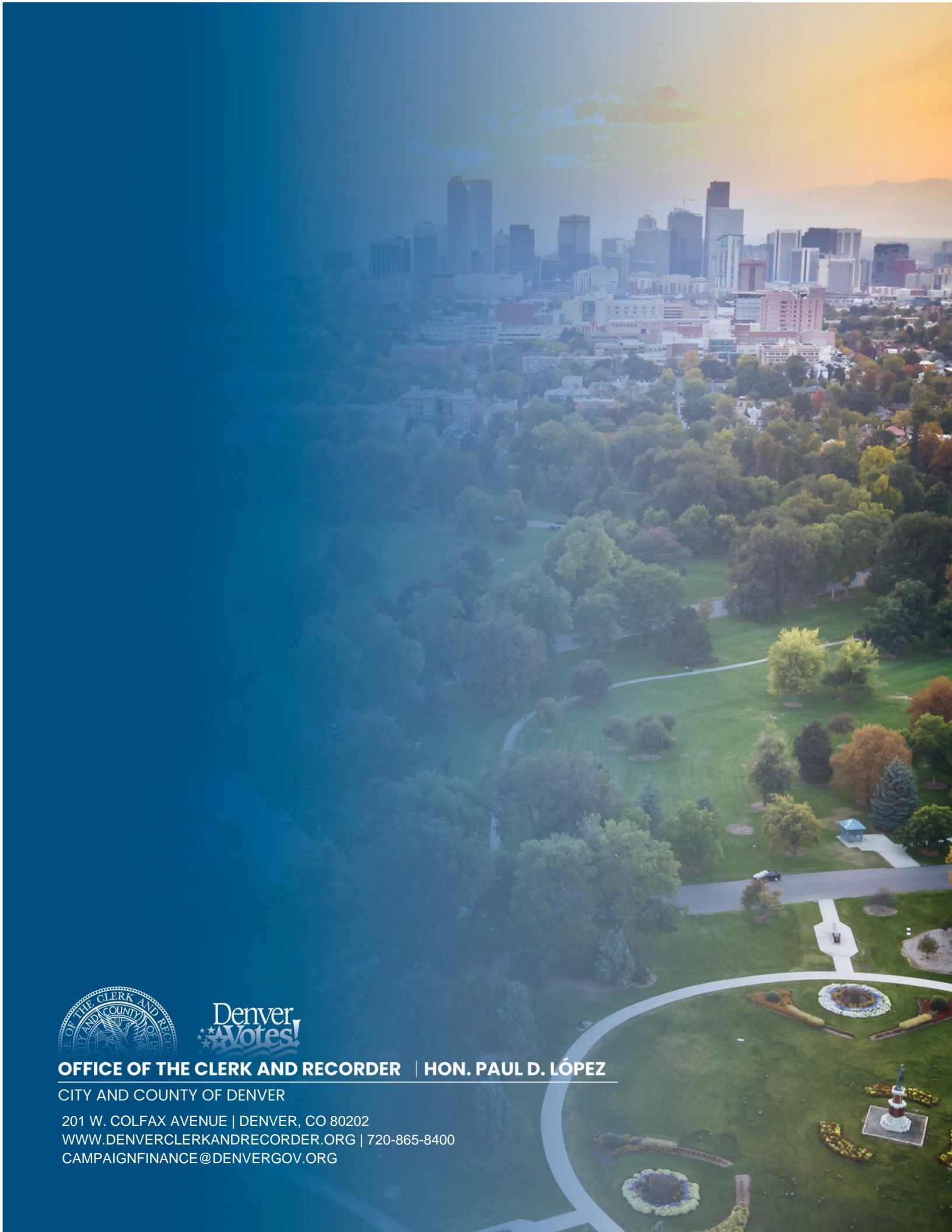
Part 8. Clerk and Recorder

§2.8.1 Office of clerk and recorder created; powers and duties.

There is hereby created the office of clerk and recorder. Said clerk and recorder shall have full charge and control of, exercise all the powers, and perform all the duties now required of the clerk in the charter of the City and County of Denver; likewise, in addition thereto, shall exercise all the powers and perform all the acts and duties now required, or that may be hereafter required, by the constitution, or general laws of this state, to be exercised, or performed, by the county clerk and recorder, and the duties of the office of the recorder provided for in the charter of the City and County of Denver, now performed by the commissioner of property. From and after June 1, 1919, the clerk and recorder shall serve as a member of the election commission, without additional compensation.

(Charter 1960, A11.1; amended May 17, 1916)

- ii. Chapter 15 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code, entitled “Elections”. [Chapter 15 - ELECTIONS | Code of Ordinances | Denver, CO | Municode Library](#)
- iii. Article III of Chapter 15 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code, entitled “Campaign Finances”. [ARTICLE III. - CAMPAIGN FINANCES | Code of Ordinances | Denver, CO | Municode Library](#)



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