



## DENVER CITY COUNCIL

# 2023 Policy and Budget Priorities

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The Denver City Council worked hard over the past year listening to, and engaging with, communities throughout the city to identify the most urgent needs of the people of the City and County of Denver. Through a detailed process at its annual budget retreat on May 20, 2022, the council worked collaboratively to set six budget priorities, along with a set of specific items the council believes deserve particular attention.

These budget priorities are listed below and serve as a guide as city agencies prepare for the 2023 budget. The mayor must brief the council on his budget proposal on or before September 15, after which the council will hold a series of hearings. The City Council must approve the final budget by November 8.

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**Budget Priority: *Focus on improving Community Engagement and Customer Service to support residents navigating city services, resources, and accessibility, including language access.***

**Primary considerations for this budget priority:**

- Fund an Office of Community Engagement in the executive branch to oversee:
  - Community engagement
  - Community Navigators
  - Translation services
  - Citizens Academy
  - Education on running successful and inclusive nonprofit organizations
  - Modernization of ordinances around Registered Neighborhood Organizations
- Increase community engagement funding for City Council District Offices

**Secondary considerations for this budget priority:**

- Fund community engagement efforts at the Department of Housing Stability
- Fund software for constituent services for the City Council, including the addition of engagement software to citywide software
- Capital funding and programmatic funding for consultants, public process, and community grants for another round of participatory budgeting
- Funds to reframe 311 for customer service and city services navigation

**Budget Priority: Increase affordable housing and support those experiencing homelessness throughout our city. Mitigate and reduce the involuntary displacement of community members and businesses.**

**Primary considerations for this budget priority:**

- Fund improvements in development services, including increasing staffing in Community Planning and Development
- Fund homeless supportive services, including additional funding for Safe Outdoor Spaces, Safe Parking, Tiny Homes, addiction and mental health treatment, employment training programs, and a navigator linked to homelessness programs
- Funding for housing stability, Temporary Rental and Utility Assistance (TRUA), legal assistance, single-family housing rehabilitation and repair, rental assistance, and tenant-landlord counseling
- Grants for Accessory Dwelling Unit construction
- Funding for community planning to implement Blueprint Denver advanced equity and area plans, including acceleration of Neighborhood Planning Initiatives and increasing the number of small area plans
- Gap funding for targeted construction and preservation of deed-restricted rentals and for-sale housing
- Legal assistance dollars for Right to Counsel

**Secondary considerations for this budget priority:**

- Funds to the Office on Aging to assist the elderly population with finding and applying for services
- Funds for immigrant legal defense

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**Budget Priority: Reframe safety in a public health, evidence-based, and anti-racist context with community investment to ensure healthy neighborhoods.**

**Primary considerations for this budget priority:**

- Fund mental health, wellness, and addiction services prioritizing mental health and addiction services for residential and in-patient care. Increase counseling, addiction recovery beds, and other direct-service tools
- Funding for Support Team Assistance Response (STAR) program
- Funding for youth support programming, including
  - Violence prevention
  - Employment and childcare
- Funds for litter and graffiti clean-up in neighborhoods

**Secondary considerations for this budget priority:**

- Funding to restore staffing at the Denver Sheriff's Department and for a retention survey for current employees
- Funds for an Office of Neighborhood Safety connected to, but not run by, the Department of Safety

- Funding to restore staffing at the Denver Sherriff's Department and for a retention survey for current employees
  - Funds for an Office of Neighborhood Safety connected to, but not run by, the Department of Safety
  - Funds for the overhead and activation of community recreation centers (parks, rec. centers, facilities), including recommendations made by the Department of Parks and Recreation's alternative outdoor recreation plan. Includes funding overhead of city-owned property leased to nonprofits
  - Expanded funding for the Correlates of Crime program piloted in DPD District 4
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**Budget Priority: *Prioritize and support the recovery, resilience, and innovation of our workforce, local businesses, and community organizations.***

**Primary considerations for this budget priority:**

- Funding for small business assistance, including additional pop-up business funds for commercial areas throughout the city in small commercial corridors, business improvement districts, and creative districts
- Fund stipends for construction training, support services, and pre-apprenticeships
- Develop and fund food insecurity strategies (cold storage and fleet)
- Implement hero/premium pay for non-city essential workers, including employees of service contractors
- Fund young adult employment in nonprofit organizations (one- to two-year placements)

**Secondary considerations for this budget priority:**

- Funds for nonprofit assistance, including a nonprofit shared space initiative
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**Budget Priority: *Protect our natural environment through policy and invest in communities to combat climate change.***

**Primary considerations for this budget priority:**

- Funding for tree canopy expansion and maintenance
- Additional funding for median maintenance
- Funding to add incentives for removing bluegrass lawns in favor of xeriscape
- Fund electric vehicle mobility and infrastructure (i.e., add more EV charging stations)

**Secondary considerations for this budget priority:**

- Funding to continue e-bicycle rebates
- Funds for community renewable and energy efficiency programs

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**Budget Priority:** *Increase complete multimodal transportation connections throughout the city.*

**Primary considerations for this budget priority:**

- Funding for neighborhood safety infrastructure / Vision Zero, including sidewalk funding, bike infrastructure expansion, Safe Routes to School infrastructure, and the upgrade and maintenance of multimodal transportation

**Secondary considerations for this budget priority:**

- Funds for installing, constructing, and maintaining bus shelters, benches, trash cans, etc.
  - Funds for right-of-way services
  - Funds for implementing the transit plan by encouraging transit solutions and alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles
  - Funds for additional electric vehicle shuttle projects throughout the city
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