

DENVER CITY COUNCIL

1437 Bannock Street, Room 451
Denver, Colorado 80202

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Bonita Roznos
Executive Director

October 9, 2026

Mayor Mike Johnston
1437 Bannock Street
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Mayor Johnston,

On behalf of the Denver City Council, thank you for your work and that of your administration in developing the proposed 2027 budget. We appreciate city agencies' participation throughout the budget hearings and their follow-up to our questions. These discussions were critical in helping the Council assess how the proposed budget addresses the city's fiscal forecast while meeting residents' needs.

Throughout the hearings, council members engaged deeply with the 2027 proposed budget and with agency leaders to ensure resources align with the [Council's priorities and goals](#). Our budget recommendations are grounded in the commitment to restoring basic and necessary services to Denver residents.

In addition to the budget recommendations appended to this letter, the Council offers these other concerns and suggestions that surfaced in our discussions:

- While we have seen a reduction in gun violence, the homicide rate in the city has increased. We are deeply concerned with the city's capacity to address youth violence through appropriate interventions and support systems for the community. With the decline in investment in recent years, we ask that we empower our youth and invest in their needs.
- We recommend your office communicate a resolution and a path forward in the ongoing communication between the Office of the Independent Monitor and the Department of Safety. We believe that this is a necessary step to improve efficiency within city agencies and ensure not only the safety of our residents but rebuilding and maintaining our residents' public trust.

- During our discussion, Council members repeatedly expressed concern about the effectiveness of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI). DOTI's services to the residents of Denver vary from filling our potholes to implementing Vision Zero. Given the vast responsibilities of DOTI, we urge the administration to assess the performance and the structure of the department. This includes how dollars are utilized in the Mobility Special Revenue Fund.
- Finally, we request a review of the volume-based trash program in the Solid Waste Division and a presentation at the Transportation and Infrastructure committee in mid-2027.

We look forward to continued dialogue as the 2027 budget moves toward final adoption. Should any of these recommendations be implemented, we respectfully request that your response include details on the funding source so that the Council can fully evaluate the final proposed budget in context.

We hope this process reaffirms the shared goal we all hold: a balanced, transparent, and community-driven approach to building a stronger Denver.

Respectfully,



Diana Romero Campbell
President



Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez
President Pro Tempore

Cc:

Nicole Doheny
Justin Sykes
Emily Garnett
Jenn Ridder
Jeff Dolan
Tim Hoffman
Victoria Tonikian
Dominick Moreno



DENVER CITY COUNCIL

Denver City Council Recommendations for the Proposed 2027 Budget

Recommendations Supported by a Supermajority of Council Members

Arts & Venues

- Cultural Affairs (\$100,000): Additional funding for community event support and community grants.

City Attorney's Office

- Fund a 3rd City Attorney for the Denver City Council (budget neutral): Reinstate the third City Council attorney specialist to manage the increased workload for legislation, collective bargaining, and other legal guidance.

Community Planning and Development

- Fund the Neglected and Derelict Property (NADP) staff (\$180,000): Add another neglected and derelict building staff member to help this small team continue to execute the program.

Cross Agency Proposals

- Hire additional inspectors across four agencies to help with heavy caseloads in these four public facing offices (\$945,000). These inspectors are instrumental to minimizing health risks and ensure that businesses and residents comply with city and state standards and codes. Specifically, fund one food safety and cannabis inspector in the Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE), two residential health inspectors in DDPHE, two DOTI Right of Way inspectors, and two Zoning/ Neighborhood inspectors (ZNIS) within Community Planning and Development (CPD).

Denver Economic Development & Opportunity

- Restore the Business Improvement Opportunity (BIO) fund (\$4,000,000): Restore funding for the business improvement opportunity fund, which gives grants to small businesses affected by city-wide construction projects.

- Restore Denver Day Works Funding (\$530,000): Restore the dayworks program, using DEDO's priority programs for low-income residents. HOST eliminated this program on the basis that it did not meaningfully result in shelter exits and should be out of HOST's jurisdiction, though it recognized the utility of the program for ensuring job placements for shelter residents.

Denver Health & Hospital Authority

- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program (\$35,000): Covers the cost for nurse raises and benefit increases in 2027. Updating reimbursement rates supports this critical work, strengthens the response to survivors and fairly compensates Denver Health for services provided on the city's behalf.
- Denver CARES (\$2,000,000): Restore city funding for Denver CARES and its Emergency Services Patrol. Denver has historically supported these services, and Denver Health agreed to absorb the reduced city contribution in 2026 as a one-time commitment made in good faith during the city's financial challenges. These services are critical to community safety as they provide transportation, assessment, withdrawal management and connections to treatment for people experiencing substance-use crises. They also give police and emergency responders a dedicated care option for people who need stabilization. Restoring funding honors that partnership and sustains essential crisis-response services.

Denver Parks and Recreation

- Restore full-time Park Ranger workforce (\$500,000): Restore the City's full-time Park Ranger workforce to strengthen park stewardship, visitor support, public safety, and consistent coverage of Denver's urban parks and trails. The funding will support four FTE and a data-driven citywide deployment plan and attention to park needs.

Denver Sheriff's Department

- Funding Denver Sheriff Department case management positions (\$300,000): Restore Denver Sheriff Department case management positions, who are chronically understaffed yet provide vital services necessary to prevent recidivism into our jails.
- Fund another sheriff recruit class and deputy positions (\$2,000,000): Properly fund recruitment and deputy positions in the Denver Sheriff's Department.

Department of Housing Stability

- Increase Temporary Rental and Utility Assistance (TRUA) Funding (\$5,500,000): Increase funding for the TRUA program by \$5.5 million in 2027. This investment supports housing stability for thousands of Denver residents.

Department of Safety

- Increase 911 Emergency Communications Center Staffing (\$350,000): Despite improvement in 911 call response times since 2023, Denver is below the National Emergency Number Association's standard of answering 90% of 911 calls within 15 seconds and 95% within 20 seconds. The increase in funding will allocate an additional 4 FTEs to 911 Emergency Communications Center, with at least one to help lead the Department of Safety's strategy for improving 911 emergency response times in 2027.

Department of Transportation & Infrastructure

- Residential Permit Parking Program (\$221,074): Fund two additional FTE to expand the residential permit parking and neighborhood curbside management. These positions would support evaluating neighborhood requests, establishing new permit areas, and managing existing programs, with priority given to neighborhoods affected by major development and event-related parking demand.

Office of the Independent Monitor

- Staffing for OIM (\$335,000): An increase in funding for the Office of the Independent Monitor to cover one FTE Monitor, one FTE Policy Advisor, and funding for the community engagement efforts. It appears that the city has not provided OIM with the additional budget to pay for the annualization of a previously funded FTE for 2027. This increased funding allows the OIM to fill a vacant outreach position and an additional policy analyst position for 2027.

Office of the Municipal Public Defender

- Municipal public defender staffing (\$100,000): Restore part of the Office of the Municipal Public Defender budget for training and key positions.

Office of Social Equity and Innovation

- Fund Violence Intervention Positions (\$250,000): This program was funded in part by an expiring grant. The increase in funding will restore two positions with city dollars to help with violence interruption.

Technology Services

- 311 Staffing (\$591,895): Add five FTE call takers to account for the increase in time off for current staff and address the 2027 goals. The 2027 goals accept a 10% hang-up rate (up from 5.0% in 2025) and an 8-minute average wait (up from 4:45 in 2025).

Recommendations Supported by a Simple Majority of Council Members

Denver Economic Development & Opportunity

- NEST Program (\$250,000): Allocate \$250,000 in support to partially replace expiring grant and ARPA funding for the Neighborhood Equity and Stabilization (NEST) program.

Denver Sheriff Department

- Restore Crisis Response Team Positions (\$90,000): Reinstate funding for three vacant Crisis Response Team positions within the Sheriff's Department. These roles are essential for safely managing individuals experiencing mental health crises in custody.

Department of Housing Stability

- Next 56 Denver apartments (\$300,000): Next 56 Denver apartments provide supportive housing, intervention, and wrap around support for 56 teens and young adults 18-24 persisting in chronic homelessness. These young people often have aged out of the foster care system with few places/spaces for non-congregant housing.

Department of Transportation and Infrastructure

- Restore the Transportation and Mobility Special Revenue Fund to street-safety investment (\$8,900,000): Reallocate \$8.9 million currently proposed for parking operations to the Transportation and Mobility Special Revenue Fund to capital projects implementing Vision Zero, Safe Routes to School, and Denver's adopted pedestrian, bicycle, and transit plans.
- Funding for DOTI's Office of Community and Business Engagement (\$400,000): Funding for the safety programming that was cut due to not receiving a large grant.