

Mayor & Commissioner Quotes

Arapahoe County Housing Crisis Telephone Town Hall March 30, 2023

Commissioner Leslie Summey

One in three residents, over 88,000 of our residents, pay more than 30% of their income on housing. That is a 13% increase from 2016--that is why we need more affordable housing. We have 108,500 housing units approved and ready to build which would provide housing for at least 284,000 individuals.

This is important because Arapahoe County is projected to have more than 775,000 residents by 2050.

"Why do approved units take so long to build? There are many reasons including: labor and supply chain shortages, developer priorities and market conditions. We also need to make sure our infrastructure can handle the influx in population. From transportation to water and sewer, all these factors take time.

Mayor Stephanie Piko, Centennial

Municipalities refer to what we call home room authority, which in the Colorado Constitution allows for cities and their residents to provide community specific solutions to address local issues. This allows us to address our specific needs of our community and work with our residents. Not every resident may be happy with the decision--they have the chance to be heard by local officials who can be held accountable for the outcomes of the local development.

Senate bill 23-213 has the goal of eliminating the cities and there for the citizens voice in local land use planning taking away a constitutional protected right, the right of home rule.

Mayor Beiter-Fluhr, Sheridan

Sheridan has a population of about 6,100 people in a 2-square mile area on the far western edge of Arapahoe County. We are a land locked area with dense population. We are in support of affordable housing for our residents who continue to see the costs of housing increase.

Our city is working hard to provide favorable housing without mandates from the state. We are aggressively working on solutions to the affordable housing issue.

Cities in Arapahoe County are pushing for affordable housing in the County, truly affordable housing. Senate bill 23-213 does not guarantee that any housing will be affordable.

Any policy changes that we make should have the voices of our citizens included in that outcome.

Commissioner Bill Holen

Transit is important to this topic in many respects. The county is very supportive of transit development, not only will this help travel along our roads but also diminish greenhouse gases.

Commissioner Jeff Baker

Our plan review fees are intended to just cover the Counties expenses to review them. Reviews take place with engineers within the County as well as local fire departments, water providers, parking and traffic reviewing all aspects of the proposed build to affordable housing.

We know that one size does not fit all. Some areas will embrace and love the idea of ADU's and start right away, while neighborhoods of single-family homes are wary of the increased density and traffic that these ADU's will

trigger. We are trying to get regulations done county wide, we do not want to patch work rules around the county but again we realize that one size does not fit all. The planning commission is reviewing ADU regulations right now.

Commissioner Jessica Campbell-Swanson

We are looking at a housing study, water study and the overall impact within the County. We are looking at AUD's and short-term rentals, it is a work in progress but are working to make sure it is the best outcome for our residents.

Mayor Katy Brown, Cherry Hills Village

Affordable housing generally starts with the concepts of the area median income (AMI). Every community and region can have its own AMI which can make it a moving target. The bottom line is there is no standard definition of affordable housing.

This bill would put an end to all of that by taking decision making out of the hands of local communities and giving it to the state. Community development is governed by zoning which basically tells you what you are allowed to build on your property. This is called use by right, which basically means you do not need permission to use your land in the way in which it was built. Zoning is currently created by local government with extensive input from their communities. This bill takes away a community's ability to situate housing where it makes sense.

This bill does not consider or make allowances for increases in essential services like schools, fire protection and law enforcement. Where will we put new schools? Who is going to build them? Who will pay to increase our law enforcement to serve more people and where will that money come from? This bill takes away your voice.

Land use and zoning has been done by local governments for more than 100 years, for a reason. Your locally elected government understands the unique needs and desires of your community. We know where the traffic problems are, we know where the school bus stops are, we know where the flood plains are. No state agency could ever know that much about every city in Colorado, and they can't be treated the same.

Commissioner Carrie Warren-Gully

What the County feels is important while working with our local cities and towns is that local communities have the ability to work on their own zoning and the issues that face their communities, which are unique to them.

Mayor Kyle Schlachter, Littleton

All of our communities in Arapahoe County talk regularly about the impact of climate, the environment and housing. We want to make sure we know what all our communities are doing the best we can. Every area has different needs but they all the needs impact everyone, so it is important to work together.