



CITY OF ASPEN



2021 REGIONAL, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

*Adopted and Approved at the January 12, 2021 regular City Council meeting
Resolution #2, Series of 2021*



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CITY OF ASPEN

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PURPOSE OF THE POLICY AGENDA

The purpose of the City of Aspen’s 2021 Regional, State and Federal Policy Agenda (hereinafter “Policy Agenda”) is to inform city advocacy on policy decisions that have the potential to significantly impact 81611 and surrounding jurisdictional boundaries. This includes legislative decisions that may be made by the Colorado General Assembly or the U.S. Congress. It also includes various non-legislative decisions that can be opined at the federal, state and regional levels, including but not limited to those before Colorado agencies (*i.e.*, Air Quality Control Commission, Public Utilities Commission, Department of Transportation, Department of Regulatory Affairs), federal agencies (*i.e.*, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Transportation, the Federal Communications Commission), regional governments (*i.e.*, Regional Transportation District) and intergovernmental coalitions (*i.e.*, Colorado Municipal League, Mountain Pact, Colorado Communities for Climate Action, Climate Mayors, Northwest Colorado Council of Governments, Colorado Association of Ski Towns, Water Quality/Quantity Committee, EOTC)

The City offers the Policy Agenda as a guideline to regional, state and federal policy leaders for reference when considering decisions impacting the City of Aspen. This agenda was developed in advance of the 2021 Colorado General Assembly. With the coordination of the Sr. Paralegal, policy team staff and the City Manager, it will be used by individual City Council members and city staff to inform city positions taken on specific bills once these legislative sessions begin. At that point, Council may consider adopting amendments to the Policy Agenda to address specific bills that have been proposed.

Council may revisit the Policy Agenda at any point. It may do so as a body or with the Policy Advisor fellow as no intergovernmental affairs committee exists. City Manager has created this policy fellow position for the purpose of convening on an ad hoc basis as necessary when one or more of the following circumstances exist:

1. There is an immediate need for council members to participate with staff in developing a strategy to advance or defeat a proposed policy which is clearly addressed by the City’s Policy Agenda or other council-approved policy documents, or
2. A decision is expected to be made on regional, state or federal policy that affects a matter which council has previously provided general direction on and that could significantly impact the city, but which council did not provide sufficient specific direction on (either through its Policy Agenda or other approved policy documents) and with timing that will not allow for council direction to be obtained. In these limited situations, the City Manager and Policy Advisor fellow may discuss such policy proposals so that the city can advocate accordingly. Council is to be informed whenever such direction has been provided and may choose to subsequently revisit such direction.



Modifications to this Policy Agenda require consistency, when applicable, with the criteria listed below:

1. Uniformity with current city council goals, community expectations and Aspen Area Community Plan;
2. Impact on our citizens general health, safety & welfare;
3. Expected relevance in the upcoming or present state and federal legislative sessions;
4. Uniqueness of issue or impact to the City of Aspen and/or to our regional partners;
5. Viability or likelihood of achieving goal weighed with importance of beginning to address/highlight critical issues;
6. Opportunity for providing funding for City of Aspen or its community partners; and,
7. Availability of metrics of success that would allow the position to be deleted from future agendas if achieved

This policy agenda recognizes circumstances arise wherein a City Council member may be a lone representative of an organization and must address and/or vote on a policy position on the spot. Departures from these criteria are made in unique circumstances as determined by council, such as when adoption of a city position is important to support its regional partners, even while the policy in question is otherwise of limited consequences to the city. Further, departures may broaden our approach for advocacy with policies that align with our values and intention for our state and nation even when they are benign towards Aspen or may disadvantage Aspen for a larger good or shared goal.

This policy agenda further recognizes that Aspen may look at how affiliations and like-minded organizations may take position on certain pieces of legislation. Aspen will strive to take position with the recognition that it is unique, and although guidance from interest groups and Colorado Municipal League may be sought, there are times where our position may not be consistent or aligned.

The City welcomes the opportunity to discuss the Policy Agenda. Please direct any questions to City Council members or to the City's Senior Paralegal, Tara Nelson at (970) 920-5059.



PRINCIPLES AT A GLANCE

Deliver Quality Essential Services

The City urges Congress and the General Assembly to expand resources for those essential services that serve the city's most vulnerable, including childcare assistance, access to affordable health care, mental health and addiction services, and protect the community and the environment. As identified in the Aspen Area Community Plan, the City of Aspen's intent is to ensure a broad visitor base over the long-term, bolstering the sustainability of our visitor-based industry. In addition, this plan calls for more aggressive measures to ensure that the commercial sector provides essential products and services, and to ensure balance between a local-serving and visitor-oriented commercial sector. We foster policy to facilitate the sustainability of essential businesses that provide basic community needs. It is apparent that gaps still exist in the provision of essential services including adequate housing and health care options for all community residents. We value a collaborative approach to finding creative, sustainable solutions. As a principle, we are guided by professional, legal and community standards that provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to achieve a higher quality of life through: self-reliance, public safety, health and well-being, education and lifelong learning.

Environmental Sustainability

The City of Aspen maintains its commitment to promote environmental stewardship and lead climate action efforts throughout the Roaring Fork Valley and beyond. We will continue to advance policy that supports our ability to protect our unique local environment, conserve resources and deliver a sustainable future for all. We will investigate and support efforts and policies that offset and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in meaningful and measurable ways as well as those that reduce waste through prevention and diversion. Aspen's Climate Action Plan (CAP) is the community's roadmap for reducing GHG emissions in Aspen and is used to inform which strategies and policies should be pursued by the City to further the mitigation of climate change.

Lands & Natural Resources

The City of Aspen has established a dynamic natural resource program that encompasses both the urban forest and the surrounding natural resources. With over 1,100 acres of open space being 'locally secured' and protected by taxpayer funded acquisitions situated within a county comprised of thousands of acres of Federal BLM and Forest Service lands, we are committed to preserving and protecting these vital resources as well as enhancing our natural surroundings. We work to preserve open spaces for recreational use, wildlife habitat, scenic view planes and sustainment of our agricultural heritage; protect water sources and ensure a sustainable water supply; protect air and water quality to reduce impacts to residents.



Health, Housing & Human Services

Aspen is dedicated to supporting and sustaining healthy communities that strengthen individuals and families while providing reasonable health and human services for anyone who calls the Aspen Area “home”. We will strengthen the quality of life and well-being for all people in our community by practices that provide and promote opportunities in housing through the lens of policy that expands access and aids in inclusion and equity regionally and statewide. We strive to advance the framework for jobs and access to services, such as education, public safety and health through all phases of life. We value a collaborative approach to finding creative, sustainable solutions and are guided by professional, legal and community standards in providing opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to achieve a higher quality of life through:

- **Self-Reliance:** We must work together to help each person in our community meet his or her basic needs and remain self-sufficient to the greatest extent possible.
- **Public Safety:** We must continue to ensure that our safety services (police, sheriff, fire, child and adult protection, Mountain Rescue and emergency response, etc.) are efficient, effective, accessible and coordinated.
- **Health and Well-Being:** We must encourage the highest level of personal health for everyone in our community through programs that encourage healthy lifestyles, reduce risks and create access to quality health care regardless of age, income or ability. Local and regional public health agencies, local boards of health, providers and non-profits must work together to ensure community-wide access to a comprehensive set of health services.
- **Education and Lifelong Learning:** We must work together to ensure educational opportunities are available to all members of our community

Service Integration & Collaboration

City of Aspen aims to ensure effective use of taxpayer funds and successful outcomes through efficient service delivery and integration of public programs and services. To increase efficiency and effectiveness, City of Aspen engages in and strongly supports collaborative efforts within city departments and with partner agencies and organizations in the local community, regionally, and state-wide.



Local Control

As a home rule municipality, the City of Aspen believes the authority to address issues that pertain to the city must reside within. Local governments are best suited to identify solutions to local issues particularly regarding the services provided and land use decisions we make. Local authority also includes the flexibility to determine use of funding locally and precludes unfunded mandates from the state or federal government.

Fiscal Responsibility

City of Aspen budgeting reflects a priority on high-quality government services through six strategic focus areas being:

- Community engagement
- Fiscal health & economic vitality
- Smart customer-focused government
- Environmental protection
- Safe, lived-in community of choice
- Development of publicly-funded housing, including broader support and involvement in the creation of non-mitigation affordable housing, public-private partnerships
- City of Aspen believes it is critical to the health of our economy to address the state revenue structure that restricts the state's ability to respond to changing economic conditions, including the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR), Amendment 23, and the Gallagher Amendment.

Deliver Aspen Area Community Plan Themes

We are committed to revitalizing and sustaining the underpinning of our thriving community, the Aspen Idea. Our vision, map and plan of action for achieving goals rests with our Aspen Area Community Plan (AACP). We strive to encourage collaboration among non-profit organizations, local government, local businesses and individuals while fostering greater inclusivity and participation in cultural events amongst the spectrum of community residents and visitors while supporting activities and infrastructure, both social and physical, that enable and sustain the Aspen Idea. Implementing the themes of the 2012 AACP will require collaboration and cooperation among public sector agencies, businesses, private non-profits, local institutions and the general public. We are committed to:

- Revitalizing and sustaining the Aspen Idea
- Achieving sustainable land use practices that support a healthy year-round community and a thriving, vibrant visitor-based economy
- West of Castle Creek Corridor area should provide a transition from rural expanses of Pitkin County to urbanized atmosphere of downtown Aspen
- Providing an efficient, multi-modal and integrated transportation system that reduces congestion and air pollution

- 
- A strong and diverse year-round community and a viable and healthy local workforce are fundamental cornerstones for the sustainability of the Aspen area community
 - Aspen will be a local, regional, state and national leader in all aspects of environmental stewardship
 - Preserving our historic resources differentiates us a community and contributes to our long-term cultural awareness and sustainability as a community
 - Strengthen the quality of life and well-being for all people in our community by providing or promoting opportunities in housing, jobs and access to services, such as education, public safety and health through all phases of life
 - Supporting programs and policies that promote affordable housing locally, regionally and at the state level

Inclusion and Equity

The City of Aspen is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable community. By “inclusive”, we mean that we strive to give all people a place at the table as we engage in the processes to consider policies and make decisions toward our shared future. We will work to ensure that everyone, regardless of identity, feels welcome and is able to contribute to, and enjoy, the vibrancy of the community. By “equitable”, we mean that the outcomes of our inclusive processes aim to create conditions where all people, especially historically marginalized groups, have full and equal access to the opportunities and resources necessary to thrive in the community. We will identify and remove any structural inequities in our city policies, land use regulations, city charter, or other governing documents.

In this commitment, we are affirming that our individual and collective diversity in gender, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identify, citizenship status, education, disability, socio-economic status, or any other identify is a valuable asset to Aspen’s present and future. Accordingly, we will support policies and efforts that have the potential to increase, promote, achieve and foster inclusivity and equity in Aspen and the great Roaring Fork Valley region.



The following are the City of Aspen's priorities for the 2020 legislative session, NOT including references to legislation that will be introduced in the General Assembly. City staff will closely monitor active legislation introduced in these areas as well as request regional support for bills that pertain and have interest to us.

PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE

Affordable Housing

This policy area includes deed restricted and free market owner-occupied and rental housing units which house Aspen and Pitkin County residents whose annual income is up to 240% of AMI. Affordable housing is essential to the economic and social health and sustainability of the City of Aspen. In the face of some of the highest housing and construction costs in the United States, the City of Aspen is focused on the provision of quality affordable housing to ensure the continued viability of the community. As such, the City advocates for State and Federal policies and regulations which support its affordable housing program, including:

- State laws respecting home-rule authority and permitting municipal government to raise revenue and budget for the development of affordable housing to meet local demand;
- State laws which enable local government to acquire or dedicate land for the development of affordable housing;
- Increased federal and state funding for affordable housing tax credits, vouchers, subsidies and other financial tools to support the development of affordable housing;
- Federal and state funding assistance for housing authorities to support the development and management of affordable housing.

Climate Action and Resource Conservation

Climate change is leaving an indelible mark on Colorado and threatens the quality of life of residents. The City of Aspen's Climate Action Office identifies our city as one that is dependent on a stable climate and the maintenance of natural resources for a thriving economy. Aspen is committed to reducing GHG emissions through programming and policy in the following categories: low and zero emissions transportation, waste reduction, energy reduction in buildings, and advocating for state and federal regulations that support GHG emissions reductions. We support climate change preparedness, adaptation and resiliency efforts, the Colorado GHG Pollution Reduction Roadmap, as well as more aggressive goals and regulations that would require the state and country as a whole to reduce GHG Emissions. Aspen's local CAP identifies the actions necessary to achieve a sustainable future for our community. Last released and updated in 2017, the CAP maintains our ambitious reduction targets and refocuses our commitment to Aspen's future. The City works in collaboration with Colorado Communities for Climate Action (CC4CA) to address the legislation that the City expects to focus the bulk of its resources and political capital on regarding climate action. CC4CA is a coalition of local governments across the state that work to strengthen state and federal climate



policy. The City also engages with other coalitions, such as The Mountain Pact and Climate Mayors, to advance climate change mitigation and resiliency efforts at the regional and federal levels.

Aspen is committed to resource conservation through the elimination of single use items, converting organic material into compost, increased recycling education, and diverting construction and demolition materials away from landfills. Per the AACP, Aspen supports policies which will promote resource conservation by these methods.

Furthermore, we support the preservation and expansion of local governments' ability to engage in climate action efforts that include local and multi-city commitments. These partnerships and affiliations leverage successes at the state, national, and international level and create further value for our community and others.

Public Lands – Natural Resources, Wildlife, Parks, Recreation

Pitkin County is 88% public land. Those lands provide essential resources, landscapes, and recreation opportunities which support the health and sustainability of our community, economy, and ecosystems. The proper management of public lands mitigates community impacts from natural disasters, ensures these lands support ecological health and biodiversity, provides diverse recreation opportunities, and supports commercial and conservation uses. Given Aspen's proximity to public lands, dependence on those lands for community sustainability, and prioritization of climate and environmental action, the City advocates for policies and regulations which deliver the following:

- Proactive forest management and wildfire mitigation which reduces threats from wildfire at the Wildland-Urban Interface and provides resources for wildland fire mitigation and management;
- Federal lands management rooted in best practices and which balances recreation development and commercial uses with conservation ensuring the long-term health and biodiversity of public lands;
- Federal lands policy and regulatory processes focused on public engagement and input, collaboration, responsiveness, and adaptation to local needs and conditions;
- Recreation management focused on habitat preservation, user experience, diversity of travel and access opportunities, and the sustainable management of existing resources.
- Extremely limited support for transfer of public lands to the states in cases where public access and public benefit remain unchanged
- Adequate funding for Colorado Avalanche Information Center and overall adequate funding for Forest Service and emergency agencies enacting and removing fire fuels, load mitigation, campsite restoration and maintenance



Public Health & Safety

Providing for these quality of life factors is one of the core functions of municipal government. Community policing, clean drinking water, a healthy environment, development regulations, safe transportation, and parks, recreation and open space programs are essential elements of a health community. The City of Aspen is dedicated to providing these community services. The City is focused on advocating for policies and regulations which assist in providing the services essential to a healthy, safe community, including:

- Federal and state policies supporting community policing, intervention, prevention, public health, and rehabilitation programs which support local control of public safety and health outcomes;
- Financial and policy support for inter-governmental coordination in the provision of public safety and health services and programs;
- Local control over land use and development regulations which guarantee Aspen's ability to implement planning, zoning, and design controls on the built environment, and assess impact fees and other exactions on development activities to deliver community goods and off-set the impacts from development;
- Regulatory and financial support for the conservation of lands and provision of recreation services to support public and environmental health;
- As members of the Western slope and residents of rural Colorado, a less populated side of Colorado, we would like to see equitable distribution of resources needed to protect our community health and safety
- In the event of an epidemic, pandemic, crisis or future public health concern, ensure medical services are equally accessible to everyone (*e.g., rapid testing, drive-thru COVID-19 testing without a physician's referral*)

Telecommunications

Like transportation, water, sewer, and energy services, telecommunications infrastructure is an essential public utility. The 21st Century economy relies on fast, reliable, accessible, and affordable telecommunications services. As a rural community, Aspen and its surrounding area are underserved by private telecommunications providers, particularly widely accessible high-speed broadband access. Aspen is focused on ensuring that telecommunications infrastructure is responsibly deployed and managed to mitigate impacts to community aesthetics, public health, and public property while providing accessible, reliable telecommunications utility services. Aspen supports policies and regulations which:

- Support the development of municipally owned or managed telecommunications utilities infrastructure and franchises, including cellular and broadband services;
- Oppose federal or state preemption of municipal control over access to and regulation of infrastructure and development within public rights-of-way and the preemption of imposition of design controls over utilities infrastructure;

- 
- Ensure equitable and affordable access to high-speed, quality mobile and broadband telecommunications services

Water Availability & Conservation

Providing a safe, legal and reliable water supply to the City's water customers is necessary for supporting a vibrant community. Water, especially in the West, is a precious resource that must be diligently protected. The City promotes the efficient management of water through:

- Long-range planning efforts to identify future water needs and projects;
- Legal strategies that protect the city's water rights;
- Conservation programs that promote efficient water use;
- Coordinated responses for drought management;
- Participation in State-wide efforts to manage water resources to the benefit of Colorado communities, especially on the West Slope;
- Recognition of the importance of water storage in providing a reliable water supply. With less than a day's worth of storage, Aspen is especially vulnerable to disruptions in the water supply.

River Health

Like all of our natural environment, our local rivers are some of the community's greatest assets and the reason many people choose to visit or make the Aspen area their home. Our rivers provide for a high quality life; support recreational, real estate, and tourism economies; and provide our downstream neighbors with drinking water. The health of these rivers remains of highest importance to our citizens and is identified in several guiding documents for the City, including the Aspen Area Community Plan and the Ecological Bill of Rights. As such, the City is committed to making choices and implementing programs that protect, preserve, and promote river health now and into the future, and is focused on advocating for policies and regulation which deliver the following:

- Watershed and water resources protection and/or enhancement;
- Local control over water resources projects and regulations that have the potential to impact the quality or quantity of water in the Roaring Fork watershed;
- Local control over land use and development regulations which guarantee Aspen's ability to implement planning, zoning, and design controls on the built environment, and assess impact fees and other exactions on development activities to deliver environmental protection and off-set the impacts from development

Early Childhood

Early childhood education is a pressing issue that has the potential of providing infrastructure for or holding back a thriving economy. When parents who want to work can't fully participate, we hurt ourselves. Childcare is difficult to find, especially infant care, forcing many families to



use less desirable care, work less, delay returning to work, or leave the community. Childcare is expensive, often costing a family more than housing. The rising cost of childcare has dampened women's employment by 13 % for those with children under age 5.

Childcare is a 3-legged stool: a functioning system that supports families and children requires investing in affordability, accessibility and high quality. If a childcare proposal focuses only on bolstering one leg, the others will grow weaker under the pressure. More childcare spots won't necessarily mean parents can afford them. More money for parents won't help address quality or access.

The City of Aspen advocates for:

- An early childhood education comprehensive plan that addresses high quality, access, and affordability.
- Paid Family Leave that benefits children, families, and the community
- Labor and workforce recognition and support for the needs of families with young children

Renewable Energy

Aspen has long-supported efforts to minimize reliance on fossil fuels. In 2015 the City became the 3rd City in the nation to provide 100% renewable energy to its customers. Aspen continues to support efforts by other communities to reduce reliance on fossil fuels. Aspen should continue to develop and invest in energy resiliency. New and creative options such as storage, local renewable energy generation, and other emerging technologies should be explored to address community needs, enhance energy choices, and respond to emergency preparedness on our local scale.

Regionalism

By exploring innovative and collaborative ways to close the gaps and meet demands, the City government plays an important leadership role in the ethic of community. Regional and multi-jurisdictional cooperation and collaboration enhances our quality of life. The City of Aspen engages in and strongly supports collaborative efforts within city departments and with partner agencies and organizations in the local community, regionally, and state-wide. The City of Aspen supports statewide legislation that would encourage, but is not limited to:

- Cooperation amongst community including affordable housing goals
- Health and well being
- Trails & Open space systems and acquisitions
- Adequate funding for Colorado transportation needs
- Healthy rivers and streams
- Early childhood education funding
- Fiscal funding for K-12 education
- Emergency Plans / Public Safety / Emergency Response

- Public Lands / Forest Management / Wildfire Mitigation
- Broadband
- Post COVID-19 recovery efforts
- Legislation that affects and relates to elections: ensuring enfranchisement, campaign finance reform, increased civic and voter participation, and that elections remain fair, open, accessible and honestly run for all registered voters
- Improvement of government transparency and accountability

Transportation

The City of Aspen is a leader in Transportation Demand Management, actively supporting programs, services and infrastructure that promote the use of transit, cycling, walking and shared mobility over single occupant vehicle travel. We support commuter fringe benefits that encourage transit, bicycle, walk and other non-SOV transportation modes and oppose fringe benefits for parking and others that encourage SOV travel for commute trips. As new transportation technologies and services emerge and evolve (eg: dockless mobility, autonomous vehicles, etc) the City of Aspen supports efforts to maintain the authority for local regulation of these services. The City supports efforts aimed at regulating the share mobility industry to ensure safety, equity, data sharing, customer privacy and fair treatment of employees.

We support new transportation funding for:

- projects that maintain existing infrastructure and that are multimodal in design, legislation that encourages “complete streets” that accommodate people using all modes of travel
- policies that support increased transportation funding for both ongoing and new transit planning efforts, transit operations, clean transit vehicles and safe transit infrastructure that reduce the reliance on single occupant vehicle travel
- innovative multi-modal projects including bicycle, pedestrian and first/last mile services
- for demonstration or “sandbox” projects that provide the opportunity to test emerging technologies
- resort communities for recognizing that the needs of a commuting public and the importance of a tourism economy are directly tied to transportation improvements and reduction in traffic congestion.
- encouragement of a balanced state transportation policy that addresses the need to maintain and expand roadway, bicycle, pedestrian, transit, carpool/vanpool and demand management options to improve Colorado’s transportation system including preservation of the constitutional requirement that highway user revenues be used for the construction, maintenance and supervision of the public highways and bridges of the state
- legislation that enables and encourages the cleanest, most efficient possible technology for both private vehicles as well as public transit vehicles while preserving local control over regulation and local implementation



PROCESS

To be most effective with our voice it is vital to establish a line of communication with our affiliated district representatives. This direct method will help us be most successful with our pertinent goals and where we can provide the most assistance.

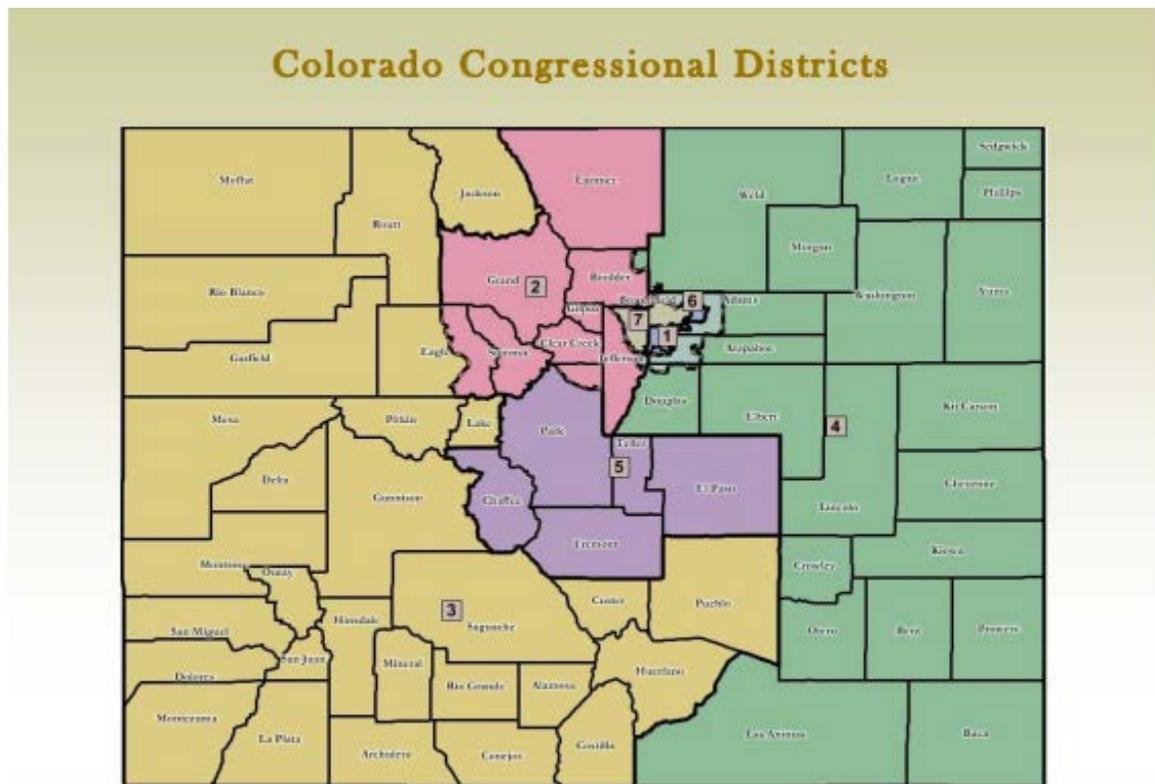
LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION



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