City of Greeley, Colorado

# CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

MAY 27, 2025

1. **Call to Order**
   Mayor Gates called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at 1001 11th Ave, Greeley, Colorado, with hybrid participation available via the City's Zoom platform.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
   Mayor Gates led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **Roll Call**
   City Clerk Heid Leatherwood called the roll.
   The following were present:

   Councilmember Tommy Butler
   Councilmember Deb DeBoutez
   Mayor Pro Tem Dale Hall
   Councilmember Brett Payton
   Councilmember Johnny Olson
   Councilmember Melissa McDonald
   Mayor John Gates

4. **Reports from Mayor and Councilmembers**
   Councilmember McDonald attended the "Meet the Fleet" event at Island Grove Regional Park, May 22, 2025, and noted that it was well attended.

5. **Civic Campus Funding**
   Deputy City Manager, Allena Portis, Assistant City Manager, Kelli Johnson, Interim Budget and Policy Director, Kalen Myers, introduced the item at 6:01 p.m.

   Ms. Johnson began with an overview of objectives:
   - to revisit and reinforce ongoing downtown investments,
   - provide background on the Civic Campus Project,
   - discuss estimated costs, and
   - review potential funding sources.

   The presentation recapped familiar project overview slides particularly in infrastructure such as stormwater improvements. This was followed by a brief history of the Civic Campus Project, which evolved through space planning assessments, facilities updates, and inter-agency collaborations dating back to 2020. Key milestones included a master plan update in March 2025.

The collaborative initiative began in fall of 2024 with the city, county, and school district. This partnership explored shared facility needs and identified strategic opportunities to maximize downtown space, support business and residential development, and increase taxable property. Notable project concepts include a boutique hotel, private office spaces, a reimagined Lincoln Park, and new downtown City Hall facilities.

Ms. Portis delivered a comprehensive financial presentation outlining potential funding strategies for the proposed Civic Campus, with an emphasis on how the project could be financed without introducing a new revenue source, such as a property tax. She presented two primary cost estimates for the project. The first option, totaling $120 million, included construction of a new City Hall, land acquisition and demolition (including the Methodist Church, Willer properties, and the Public Works building), as well as a 352-space parking garage and a $10 million contribution to the county parking garage. Utility infrastructure costs for water, sewer, and stormwater would be funded separately through the enterprise fund. Additionally, incentive funding was available for the boutique hotel and apartment components.

The second option, referred to as the "value engineered" version, would reduce overall costs by eliminating 200 parking spaces, downgrading finishes, and cutting associated fees. This option resulted in a savings of $7.7 million but would require an additional $2.6 million to build a surface parking lot. Ms. Portis explained that there are a few options for acquiring the new City Hall facility, including direct purchase, leasing, or entering into a lease-to-own agreement through a public-private partnership.

Three financing mechanisms were outlined:

- Certificates of Participation (COPs), which do not require voter approval and have a 20-year term;
- General Obligation (GO) bonds, which do require voter approval and offer a 30-year repayment term; and
- Leasing through a private developer at a standard lease rate.

Ms. Portis identified potential revenue sources, including general fund allocations, federal and state grants, land sales, and special tax initiatives such as a new capital facilities fee. Special taxes, like the Food Tax and the Quality-of-Life Tax currently fund existing capital maintenance, replacements, and park projects, and are already fully programmed for the 2026–2030 period. Redirecting these funds to the Civic Campus would require deferring or eliminating current commitments, including roof and HVAC replacements, playground upgrades, and other infrastructure needs.

To provide context, Ms. Portis reviewed how other Colorado municipalities funded similar projects. Northglenn used a combination of a sales tax and a marijuana tax to fund its $33.7 million City Hall. Golden financed their $77 million facility with general fund reserves and COPs. Steamboat Springs combined a small COP, grant funding, and reserves to cover their $37.6 million municipal complex. These examples highlighted the diversity of funding approaches and the importance of using multiple sources.

In summary, the estimated cost for the City Hall component alone ranges from $80 million to $92 million, with annual debt service between $6.7 million and $7.7 million under a COP structure. Funding sources could include the Food Tax, Quality of Life Tax, general fund, and a potential future public facilities impact fee. However, any use of existing resources would come with an opportunity cost, requiring the City to defer or reduce other services or projects.

Councilmembers raised questions and concerns about the proposed downtown redevelopment project, with a particular focus on its financial feasibility, scale, and timeline.

Councilmember DeBoutez asked if there was projected tax revenue from private developments such as Richmark's hotel and retail projects, and if those revenues could help service debt for the civic campus. Both DeBoutez and Olson emphasized the need for a financial model like the one used for West Greeley to better understand revenue impacts and financing options.

Councilmembers also discussed the potential use of public facilities fees or development impact fees to support the project, though staff noted this would depend on the outcome of ongoing fee studies and future Council direction.

Councilmembers questioned the size and cost of the proposed City Hall building, particularly the 96,000-square-foot footprint, and noted that comparable facilities in other cities are significantly smaller and less expensive. Council also suggested staff explore phased construction, such as postponing or eliminating parking garages and deferring Lincoln Park improvements. There was discussion about the financial and strategic benefits of a public-private partnership or lease-to-own model, with the possibility of delaying major investments until new revenue streams.

Council also discussed partner engagement and revenue-sharing strategies. Questions were raised about the level of commitment or involvement from entities like Richmark, Weld County, and School District 6. Councilmembers expressed interest in using tools such as TIFs, PIFs, and special district taxes to support redevelopment and create incentives for private investment, particularly for housing and retail uses downtown.

Overall, Councilmembers expressed support for continuing to plan and explore options but stressed the importance of cost containment, comprehensive modeling, and strategic phasing to ensure long-term financial sustainability and downtown revitalization.

Adam Frazier and Tyler Richardson with Richmark were available for Council questions. Mr. Richardson addressed the Council, expressing appreciation for the work done on the civic campus project and willingness to partner.

During follow-up comments, Councilmember Olson questioned whether current City-occupied properties would be involved in land swaps if Weld County commit to remaining downtown. Staff responded that while the parties interested in various parcels are known, consensus on specific parcels has not yet been reached.

Council reached consensus on pursuing Options 1 and 2, modifying service plans to ensure coverage of annual debt service, and reviewing a Public Facility Impact Fee.

Mayor Gates thanked everyone for the information.

6. **Overview and Discussion of the Small Business Land Use Center Program**
Director of Community Development, Brian McBroom, Deputy Director of Community Development, Don Threewitt, Planner, Katelyn Puga, and Civil Engineer Tina Close introduced the item at 7:05 p.m.

The purpose of the presentation was threefold:

- to provide an update on the Small Business Land Use Center,
- to answer council questions, and
- to solicit feedback on the pilot program.

Mr. McBroom noted that the Small Business Land Use Center aimed to address these issues by offering individualized customer service, better education on city requirements, and facilitated assistance through planning and engineering review processes.
Key program goals included preparing applicants for success, emphasizing the importance of hiring qualified professionals, and removing barriers to development. The center would function as a central point of contact and coordinating with other departments.

To be eligible for support, businesses must be independently owned, located or considering a location within Greeley, and have a viable project concept. The program would include an intake questionnaire to help assess project readiness. Options such as a grant program to help cover upfront costs for hiring those services would be available. These grants would not cover full expenses but would support early-stage planning to improve project feasibility and approval chances.

Mr. McBroom stated that the Land Use Center was still in its pilot phase and staff have informally worked with six small businesses. The "one-stop shop" model is central to the program, aiming to consolidate and simplify interactions with multiple departments while still preserving necessary collaboration across city divisions.

City Council expressed support for the Small Business Land Use Center and commended the program's "one-stop shop" approach with the high level of personalized customer service offered. Several members emphasized the importance of early engagement and proactive education. They suggested stronger outreach to commercial realtors and prospective business owners to prevent situations where property was purchased without full understanding of zoning restrictions, change-of-use implications, or necessary upgrades to meet code—particularly in older buildings downtown.

Councilmembers recommended formalizing communication channels with the real estate community, possibly through the local Realtors Association, and exploring ways to strengthen disclosure requirements. They also encouraged adjustments to the grant structure. They noted that while the grant amounts are helpful, they may fall short for projects in historic or aging buildings that often require significant upgrades, such as sprinkler systems or new utility infrastructure. Several members recommended factoring building age and location (such as the downtown district) into grant eligibility or award levels.

Lastly, Council discussed staffing impacts, expressing interest in how the program could scale. Staff affirmed they are currently equipped to manage the pilot program but acknowledged that increased participation could necessitate additional resources—an outcome they would welcome as a sign of success.

Mayor Gates thanked staff for the information.

7. **Scheduling of Meetings, Other Events**
   None.

8. **Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the potential purchase, acquisition or lease of real property**

   A motion go into executive session to discuss the potential purchase, acquisition, or lease of property for City services, and to receive instructions regarding negotiations, as provided for in C.R.S §24-6-402(4)(a) and §24-6-402(4)(e)(I) and Greeley Municipal Code §2-151 (a)(1) and §2-151(a)(5); and if necessary to receive advice from the City Attorney related to these matters as provided for in C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(b) and Greeley Municipal Code §2-151(a)(2)

   **Councilmember Olson moved to approve the motion. Councilmember McDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0 at 7:27 p.m.**

9. **Adjournment**

With no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Gates adjourned the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

**8. Executive Session to discuss the potential purchase, acquisition, or lease of property for City Services**

Mayor Gates started the Executive Session at 7:37 p.m. in the Colorado Room of City Center South. The meeting was electronically recorded as required by Colorado Open Meetings Law.

All Councilmembers, City Manager Raymond Lee, City Attorney Stacey Aurzada, Chief Financial Officer Allena Portis, Assistant City Manager Kelli Johnson, Deputy City Attorney Moses Garcia, Deputy City Manager Rachel Flynn, and Consultant John Hall were present.

The executive session was for the purpose of discussing to determine positions, develop strategy, and instruct negotiators regarding to discuss the potential purchase of property and the negotiation of economic development incentives as provided for under C.R.S. Sections 24-5-402(4)(a) and 24-5-402(4)(e)(I) and Greeley Municipal Code Sections 2-151(a)(1) and 2-151(a)(S); and to receive legal advice related to these matters as provided for under C.R.S. Section 24-6-402(4)(b) and Greeley Municipal Code Section 2-151 (a)(2).

Mayor Gates cautioned each participant in this executive session to confine discussion to the stated purpose, and reminded everyone that no formal action may occur in the executive session. He asked if at any point in the executive session any participant believes that the discussion was going outside the proper scope of the executive session, to please interrupt the discussion and raise an objection.

The Executive Session concluded at 8:22 p.m.

The recording of this executive session will be retained as provided in the City's records retention policy and in conformity with Colorado Open Meetings Law for a period of 90 days.

Approved

X

John Gates
Mayor

Attest

X

Heidi Leatherwood
City Clerk