

City of Greeley, Colorado
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
June 10, 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 DeBoutez attended the historic tree tour at University of Northern Colorado (UNC) hosted by the Historic Preservation Committee. She noted the medical school was coming along well and enjoyed attending the Blues Jam.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall promoted a “trail-athon” being hosted by the Poudre River Trail Board on Saturday, June 14th. He mentioned there would be archery demos, wildlife, and a drone as some of the activities and it was free to the public.

5. Lincoln Park Common - Reimagining Community Spaces

Director of Culture, Parks, and Recreation, Diana Frick, and Deputy Director of Culture, Parks, and Recreation, Jill Krantz, presented this item at 6:02 p.m. Division Manager, Planning & Capital Project Management, Susan Murray, and Director of Urban Design Practice of Kimley Horne, Rich Flierl, were available for questions.

Ms. Frick shared the transformation plans for the 5.7-acre Lincoln Park Common Park and how the revitalization aims to re-activate it as a vibrant, inclusive community space.

The project goals were rooted in extensive community feedback to include: Seven public events and stakeholder meetings, department collaboration, discussions with and the

DDA and DoubleTree and input from The Speak Up Greeley platform. This single platform drew over 1,200 visits and 135 comments.

Key features of the redesign included shaded garden areas, accessible walking paths, a versatile amphitheater, and inclusive play zones. Design elements like tree alleys and lighting inspired by historic Lake Luna are intended to enhance safety and aesthetic appeal. The plan also integrates historical elements, such as a reimagined Pioneer Fountain and references to original 1870 park features.

The transformation would be implemented through a phased approach. Phase One, budgeted at \$4.2 million, would focus on the south side of the park including the amphitheater, great lawn, walkways, lighting, and tree plantings. Infrastructure buildings, including restrooms and maintenance facilities, are planned to blend creatively into the landscape. The project envisions Lincoln Park Common as a key connector for downtown Greeley, spurring economic activity and enhancing connections to UNC and surrounding neighborhoods.

Three implementation options were presented:

- Phase One as designed– aligned with public input and economic goals but with limited future flexibility.
- Pause for further alignment with broader downtown and civic campus planning – offers long-term cohesion but risks losing public momentum and delaying improvements.
- Move forward with a scaled-down version – balances budget and flexibility but may underdeliver on transformation and public expectations.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall inquired about the \$4.2 million funding for Phase 1 of the Lincoln Park project, which was confirmed to be allocated from the Quality-of-Life fund.

In general, Councilmembers appreciated the concept but raised concerns about specific elements of the proposed design.

Councilmember Olson emphasized the need for greater public engagement data, expressing reservations about the modern, concrete-heavy aesthetic and the long-term maintenance and staffing costs. Mr. Flierl responded by explaining the design's basis in Greeley's historic "common" concept intending flexibility, artfulness, and functionality, including ADA compliance and winter accessibility.

Councilmembers McDonald and Butler voiced concerns about losing green space and questioned the aesthetic alignment with Greeley's existing character, particularly regarding Phase 2's modern elements. They stressed the importance of preserving the playground and adding features like an amphitheater and restrooms while reconsidering the full redesign until after the civic campus planning was finalized.

Councilmember DeBoutez recommended pausing the project to better coordinate with the civic campus design and encouraged learning from the most-used parks, which often feature shade and green space.

Mayor Gates supported the design's flexibility and added functionality, while acknowledging valid concerns about reduced green space and playground removal. He emphasized the importance of integrating the park redesign with civic campus plans and asked how a project pause would affect staff. Ms. Frick indicated alignment with the civic campus would be feasible.

The meeting concluded with general support for a phased approach considering community needs, fiscal responsibility, and future downtown development.

Council reached consensus on Option 2 to pause briefly for further civic campus developments.

The mayor thanked staff for the information.

6. Department of Innovation and High Performance

Chief Information Officer, Bret Naber, and Director of Innovation & High Performance, Kylie Jackson shared a presentation at 7:11 p.m.

Ms. Jackson introduced the department's mission and emphasized collaboration across departments. The team would focus on three core areas: project management, customer experience, and innovation. Leading complex projects, standardizing practices, and facilitating public interactions through initiatives like the 311 service, website overhaul, and utility billing system updates would be first priorities.

The website was expected to launch in July 2025 and a citywide 311 service was aimed for early 2026. The department would also lean towards learning more about Artificial Intelligence (AI) assistance related to government platforms.

Councilmember DeBoutez inquired whether AI could support the City Attorney's Office. City Attorney Stacey Aurzada confirmed they were using AI in a controlled environment through Westlaw's AI platform, emphasizing the importance of accuracy in legal research.

Councilmember DeBoutez also asked about complexity of systems like TRAKIT in Community Development. Mr. Naber acknowledged TRAKIT was a key example of outdated, fragmented systems, noting that a major migration is planned. The team is working with stakeholders to streamline processes before selecting new tools, and a dedicated project manager has been assigned due to the scope of work.

Councilmember DeBoutez also asked if a human would answer 311 calls. Ms. Jackson confirmed that a live person would answer, and business cards with 311 information will be distributed when the service launches alongside the new website in July.

Councilmember Olson shared a past example from Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) on integrating siloed data and stressed that project management needs to be strategic, well-scoped, and include training. He recommended forming a governance or steering committee to guide IT and project decisions.

Mr. Naber supported the idea of a governance structure, or a center of excellence, to ensure projects align with strategic priorities and resources are used effectively. He emphasized the importance of clear roles, project charters, and change management.

Councilmember McDonald shared her own challenges with the current utility billing platform and supported needed system improvements. Mr. Naber agreed the current system was outdated and fails to offer a smooth customer experience.

Councilmember Butler asked about the 311-rollout timeline. Mr. Naber stated the soft launch will coincide with the new website in July 2025.

Mayor Gates thanked staff for the information and called a brief recess at 7:39 p.m. to address a technology issue.

The work session resumed at 7:51 p.m.

7. Affordable Housing Land Use Center

Deputy Director of Community Development, Don Threewitt, and Housing Director, Deb Callies shared a presentation at 7:51 p.m.

Mr. Threewitt introduced the Affordable Housing Land Use Center and four main components:

- a concierge development review process
- a 90-day expedited review
- technical and financial assistance
- development of an affordable housing code

He explained that a dedicated housing planner, funded by DOLA, was now serving as the point of contact for affordable housing applications and tracking performance metrics. The fast-track review process, required by Proposition 123, was on track for full implementation by December 2025, ahead of the January 2027 state mandate. The process sets a 90-day window from completed application to staff decision, with allowances for extensions or withdrawals. Eligible projects exclude major items like annexations and large subdivisions, but cover most common housing review applications.

The Brownfield program offered technical assessments and funding support for redevelopment and cleanup of eligible sites. Ms. Callies elaborated on additional resources made available through Proposition 123, including \$25,000 pre-development grants for small or infill housing projects—especially valuable for addressing the unique challenges such projects often face.

The City aimed to complete 90% of eligible housing reviews within 90 days, extending the expedited process to all housing projects by mid-2026. A \$50,000 bonus was available if the program is implemented by the end of 2025, and plans were underway to use this for owner-occupied housing initiatives.

The Housing for All Advisory Board reviewed the program and outreach would be conducted with communications staff.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall supported the expedited development review processes and noted the importance of basing policy on best practices and ideas from across the country. Mr. Threewitt confirmed this local-first approach, explaining that the upcoming affordable housing code update focuses on what fits Greeley’s needs, such as changes to accessory dwelling unit regulations and parking.

Councilmember Butler acknowledged the state’s support for expedited review as a nationally proven strategy to improve housing outcomes but raised concerns about the exclusion of planned unit developments (PUDs) and rezonings from the fast-track process. Mr. Threewitt said such projects are intentionally designed for heightened scrutiny and public input, which makes standardizing timelines difficult, but alternatives were being reviewed.

Mayor Gates thanked staff for the information.

8. Scheduling of Meetings, Other Events

None.

9. Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Gates adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Approved

X

John Gates
Mayor

Attest

X

Heidi Leatherwood
City Clerk