



# 2023 Listening Tour with Mayor Yemi & City Council

## Economic Vitality Feedback Report

**Overview:** This report provides a comprehensive list of feedback related to **ECONOMIC VITALITY** captured during the seven-stop Listening Tour, which took place Aug. 4-Sept. 9. The tour included six district-specific listening sessions, one in each of the six Colorado Springs City Council districts, as well as one citywide virtual listening session. Asterisks (\*) indicate how frequently a piece of feedback or a sentiment was repeated. Feedback that is listed under a specific district indicates which listening session feedback was received at and does not necessarily reflect feedback solely from residents who live in that district.

### District 1

- 'Olympic City' going well for Colorado Springs.
- Increase Lodgers and Automobile Rental Tax (LART) for use on better infrastructure.\*\*\*\*
- Need greater diversity in economic & job opportunities.\*\*\*\*
- Flights out of Colorado Springs are more expensive, not enough choice in destinations.\*\*
- Good economic growth in the city, but infrastructure not keeping up (also under infrastructure).
- Colorado Springs needs to be 'economically viable' for people who don't have a car.
- Focus on ways to retain younger population.\*\*
- Hard to stay in Colorado Springs at current median-income level.
- Invest in 'quality of life' to attract more national, international companies.
- Over-reliance on natural resources ('i.e., God') to attract jobs and people; invest more in downtown and other cultural offerings.
- City is bad at retaining young professionals / civilians.\*\*
- Need jobs 'for regular people too, not just high income, tech, and military'.\*\*
- Need grocery store downtown.\*\*
- Shortage of trade workers.
- New amphitheater up north will be good for economy.
- 'Olympic City' – but sporting events need to be promoted and more public and available.
- 'Not Olympic City just because they train here'.
- Do more to be known as 'Olympic City' (and more) and not 'hate city' as in the past.

### District 2

- Olympic Museum is great for tourism but advertise it more.\*\*
- Need better mix of employer recruitment – too Department of Defense / tech focused.
- Raise Lodgers and Automobile Rental Tax (LART) to fund infrastructure.

- 'Too many minimum wage chain restaurants'.\*\*\*
- Expand flight options at Colorado Springs Airport / more terminal services / lounges.
- Increase support for small biz, not just large companies.
- Need more manufacturing jobs.
- Sports well supported; arts / creative economy not well supported by city.
- Reduce property taxes for people who have caregiver status.
- Glad Space Force is staying.
- Downtown is vibrant; helping to attract young, educated workforce.

### District 3

- Downtown / city doing a good job of promoting arts / creative sector.
- Continue to build strong relationship with Chamber of Commerce.
- Increasing income inequality, especially for service / hourly workers.
- Workforce development center needs city's support.
- Expand offerings at COS Airport to keep up with population growth.
- Need grocery store downtown Colorado Springs.\*\*\*\*\*
- Re-vitalization of downtown Colorado Springs is appreciated; need similar plans for S. Nevada corridor.
- Advertise 'Olympic City' more to bring tourists in.
- Cost of living getting too high.\*\*
- Bring in more jobs relevant to younger generations; need more non-military jobs.\*
- Attention downtown Colorado Springs is good, but too much gentrification is making it expensive.
- Small businesses need more support / attention from the city.
- Raise LART to help fund city services / infrastructure.
- Good that the city is hosting / promoting community events for a diverse range of people.\*\*\*
- Need more events for seniors downtown Colorado Springs.

### District 4

- Southeast's economy does not feel diverse or sustainable.
- 80916 and 80910 being overlooked for economic growth.
- Need a D4 Business District with 1 cent tax for funding.
- Not creating enough jobs for students coming out of D4.
- Use the Colorado Springs Airport to create more jobs in D4.
- Cost of living too high.\*\*
- 'Growth is up, crime is down, but only in wealthy neighborhoods'.
- Need to boost wages in Colorado Springs.
- Require new / big companies to invest in building community and 'give back'.
- Olympic City good for tourism.
- Lack of opportunities outside of tech / military.
- Need education system more aligned to available jobs in Colorado Springs.

- Incentivize large companies to have educational programs for kids in Colorado Springs.
- D2 schools 'doing the best they can with the resources they have'.
- Boost trade education in schools.\*\*\*

## District 5

- Airport is doing well.
- Tourism is doing well, support more eco-tourism.\*\*
- Cost of living is too high.\*\*\*
- Are we doing enough to attract manufacturing?
- Excited to keep Space Command – but do enough to prepare for increased development associated with it.\*\*
- Recruit more companies / jobs other than military and Department of Defense.
- Provide incentives for companies to relocate to COS.
- Difficult to navigate starting brick-and-mortar business.
- Downtown vitality and 'Olympic City' is good.
- Remove red tape for restaurants / bars to have alcohol and alcohol sales on street and activate street (will help discourage homeless to take up space).
- 'City finally has a vibrant Downtown.'
- Too much development in suburbs, need more in Downtown.
- 'Get out of troops and tourism businesses.'\*\*
- City is over-reliant on military for economic vitality.
- Lack of non-Department of Defense and 'non-accredited' jobs (need more management, consulting, finance).
- Propose new taxes to fund economic development / recruitment.
- Do more to incentivize hiring those released from prison.
- Businesses are hurting; cannot get employees.
- Simplify city's permitting process.
- 'Not enough night life and culture'; young people are leaving; brain drain.
- Do more to support city's universities and 'keep smart kids in the city.'
- 'We didn't vote for 'Olympic City' name.'
- Have a 'tax free day' like Albuquerque.

## District 6

- Not attracting businesses that provide high salaries / livable wages\*\*
- Increase foreign direct investment\*
- Are tech companies really coming?
- Boost tourism to the city / region
- Focus on more 'City for Champions' advertising.
- Olympic Museum is good but cost too much.
- Need to focus on retaining city's younger population.
- Need to focus on underserved communities in SE and SW

- City values military community and veterans but doesn't value / focus on non-military, especially retirees.
- Keeping Space Command was a good thing.
- Use tax incentives to attract more space / tech / defense sector jobs.
- Small businesses don't get the same treatment / tax breaks those big businesses get.
- Small businesses can't compete with \$19+ hour wages.
- Redevelopment needed on Academy Boulevard corridor.
- Work on internship / work placement programs for students in high school

#### Virtual (Citywide)

- Chamber of Commerce doing good work in getting Amazon, Entegris, etc.
- Cost of housing is hurting City's ability to attract businesses, jobs.
- Space Force / Command staying is big win for the City.
- Increase access to job training / workforce services.
- City needs 'broader brand' than just Olympic City USA.