



Al Gardner

Executive Director of Public Safety (Nominee)
City and County of Denver

September 8, 2025

Dear Members of Denver City Council,

It is an honor to serve as the Executive Director of Public Safety (Nominee) for the City and County of Denver. Our Department of Public Safety has a profound responsibility: to protect and support the people of Denver while ensuring that our first responders have the resources, wellness, and trust they need to succeed.

I am approaching this role with a simple commitment—listen, measure, and act. Over the past several years, I have been deeply engaged in oversight and reform efforts through my service on the Civil Service Commission, Chief's and Sheriff's Advisory Boards, Citizen Oversight Board, African American Commission, and other community leadership roles. In each of these, I worked alongside Council, community stakeholders, and public safety leadership to strengthen independence, improve accountability, and advance policies that build trust.

Below, you will find my background and immediate priorities for the coming weeks. I look forward to working with all stakeholders as I develop a broader roadmap for the department focused on budget sustainability, wellness, technology modernization, community engagement, and metrics for success.

These materials are designed not just as plans, but as starting points for dialogue. Your perspectives, along with those of Denver's diverse community partners, are vital as we shape the future of safety in our city. I am grateful for the opportunity to lead in this moment. Together, we can ensure Denver's Department of Public Safety remains both effective and trusted—taking care of those who take care of others.

With respect and commitment,

Al Gardner
Executive Director of Safety (Nominee)

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Building Safety and Trust in Denver: A Measured Start

Executive Summary

Denver deserves a Department of Public Safety that earns the public's trust, supports our first responders, and operates with transparency. As Executive Director of Public Safety, I will bring my years of service in City government, oversight boards, and executive leadership to strengthen how Denver safeguards its people. My first focus will be simple: listen, measure, and act. Over the next 45 and 120 days, we will work together to improve budget sustainability, support public safety staff wellness, stabilize Denver 9-1-1 funding, and increase community confidence through disciplined, transparent practices.

My Foundation of Experience

- Citizen Oversight Board (COB): Helped draft ballot initiative transferring oversight of the Independent Monitor from the Mayor's Office to COB.
- Work with Police Chiefs: Partnered with three police chiefs on recruiting, use-of-force policies, and community outreach.
- Civil Service commission (CSC) Discipline & Accountability: Reviewed discipline cases for both Police and Fire, and hiring and assessment of police, fire, and EMS applicants.
- Denver African American Commission: Worked with the Sheriff and community to implement the Public Integrity Division and programs like the jail lactation clinic.
- Executive Leadership: Deputy Mayor & Executive Director of General Services: Municipal budget management, policy creation, and process consolidation to produce measurable progress.

Immediate Priorities

Denver Police Department

- Advance methodologies that address violent crime without over policing community, including efforts like Place Network Investigations (PNI).
- Effectively and sustainably improve safety related to late-night downtown crowds ("out crowd").
- Address and improve community perceptions of safety in their neighborhoods, downtown, and throughout Denver.
- Support compliance and discipline credibility.

Denver Fire Department

- Secure a dedicated wellness budget to ensure continuity of care.
- Evaluate and improve apparatus replacement cycles.
- Ensure DFD can recruit, hire, and retain firefighters through future academies and retention efforts.

Denver Sheriff Department

- Increase recruitment, retention, and promotional efforts of the Denver Sheriff Department.
- Support narcotics introduction interdiction and ensure alignment of teams, technology, and funding to reduce drug contraband and overdoses in jail facilities.
- Advocate for a fair contract through the 2025 collective bargaining process.
- Build trust and morale with staff through intentional engagement opportunities.

Denver 9-1-1

- Address budget sustainability through 2027 and beyond.
- Reduce call answer times by addressing staffing challenges and embracing technology solutions.
- Oversee critical infrastructure improvements such as the replacement of the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and Carbyne implementation to modernize Denver 9-1-1's technology.
- Support continued development and integration of the Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) program and other alternative response models.

Safety, Trust, and Well-Being: A Community-Centered Roadmap for Denver

As Executive Director of Public Safety, I bring a simple commitment: Denver's residents deserve to feel safe, and Denver's first responders deserve to feel supported. My role is to serve as the civilian leader of the Department of Public Safety, with "full charge" of the operations of our police, fire, sheriff, and emergency communication agencies.

I am in the process of building a 120-day roadmap to stabilize budgets, strengthen well-being, implement critical technology, and engage Denver's diverse community groups. It builds on my years of service both externally and internally to the city on the Citizen Oversight Board, African American Commission, Civil Service Commission, and executive leadership of General Services. It also reflects lessons learned working alongside police chiefs, sheriffs, firefighters, and community leaders. I look forward to sharing this plan in the future and working together with all stakeholders to identify the best path forward for public safety in Denver.

Our north star is clear: we will measure success not just by numbers, but by trust—trust from our community and trust within our ranks.