

TO: City and County of Denver Council Members
FROM: Matthew Van Deusen, Director of Facilities Management
DATE: November 6, 2025
SUBJECT: Letter of Recommendation for Mr. Al Gardner

Dear Council Members,

It's my pleasure to write this letter of recommendation in support of Mr. Gardner for the role of Executive Director of the Department of Public Safety for the City and County of Denver. I've had the opportunity to work closely with Mr. Gardner during his time with General Services, and he is one of the most forward-thinking and committed leaders I've worked with in my career.

From the moment he joined our department, Mr. Gardner brought a clear, strategic vision and a leadership style that elevated Facilities Management to a new level. He made it a priority to ensure our team had a seat at the table alongside other city agencies. He was approachable, decisive, and deeply knowledgeable about operations -- qualities that helped us meet the needs of our stakeholders while also planning for long-term growth. He didn't just talk about improvement, he actively sought out best practices from across the country and challenged us to think bigger.

One of the things I appreciated most was his ability to connect with people. Mr. Gardner built strong relationships across the city, from our frontline staff, Council Members and the Mayor's Office to fellow executive directors. Mr. Gardner used those connections to advocate for the needs of our department. He helped shine a light on the challenges we face, especially around hiring skilled trades professionals and addressing long-overdue maintenance needs in our facilities.

On a personal note, Mr. Gardner was a mentor to me. He made time to talk through leadership challenges, encouraged me to think beyond my current role, and welcomed honest conversations about how we could improve as a department. Under his leadership, I felt comfortable asking for background on "the why" of departmental decisions and had opportunities to offer feedback on his performance. That kind of support is rare, and it made a real difference in my own growth as a leader.

One of his more impactful contributions was launching the **GS Works!** program, a workforce development initiative designed to introduce young people and apprentices to careers in city trades. With many of our experienced staff nearing retirement and us facing a competitive job market, this program is helping us build a pipeline of future talent. It's also brought new energy into our facilities teams, as students bring curiosity and enthusiasm to the work we do. Mr. Gardner's vision made this program into a real resource that is making an impact now and into the future.

In closing, Mr. Gardner is a leader who brings people together, drives meaningful change, and genuinely cares about the teams he leads. I believe he would be an outstanding Executive Director of the Department of Public Safety, and I fully support his candidacy.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please reach out if I can provide any additional insight.

Sincerely,



Matthew Van Deusen

Director of Facilities Management, Department of General Services