



July 14, 2018

Dear City Council:

Re: Proposed ordinance to fund Denver parks, trails, and open space

We write in support of City Council Bill 641, a measure to apply a small increase in sales and use taxes to fund Denver's parks, trails, rivers, and open space. We urge the Council to approve the measure so that voters can consider it this fall.

Denver prides itself on many things, including offering a wide range of outdoor opportunities. Like hundreds of thousands of others, many Western Resource Advocates staff and supporters call Denver home and enjoy the great outdoors in the heart of the city and at city properties nearby. As Denver grows in popularity and continues to draw new residents, businesses, and visitors, it is essential to apply resources to maintain and improve its unique outdoor amenities, making them clean, safe, and sustainable. The funding proposed in Bill 641 is an important step in that direction.

We make special note of the importance of language in the Bill allowing use of the fund for "restoring and protecting waterways, rivers, and streams." While critical in its own right, this provision also helps implement Colorado's Water Plan (completed in 2015). Spending funds on waterways, rivers, and streams is consistent with Water Plan values, including fostering vibrant cities, a productive economy, and a strong environment.

Though not fully articulated in the Bill, we trust that decisions to spend funds related to "waterways, rivers, and streams" includes bank restoration and clean-up projects, stream-side (riparian) habitat, streamflow protection and improvement (working with the State of Colorado and other stakeholders), water efficiency measures at city park properties (e.g., turf conversion, irrigation improvements, drought tolerant tree plantings, etc.), and educational infrastructure to teach visitors about the city's close connection to, and dependence upon, rivers across Colorado.

Thank you for bringing the issue forward.  
Sincerely,

Bart Miller, Director  
Healthy Rivers Program  
Western Resource Advocates

*Western Resource Advocates (WRA) is dedicated to protecting the West's land, air, and water to ensure that vibrant communities exist in balance with nature. We use law, science, and economics to develop and advocate for solutions that address the most pressing conservation issues in the region. We have Colorado offices in Denver and Boulder.*

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