



COLORADO  
MUNICIPAL  
LEAGUE

# Newsletter

Vol. 45, No. 20, September 27, 2019

## Municipalities Tackling Traffic Congestion with "Smart" Technologies

*By Morgan Cullen, CML legislative and policy advocate*

With chronic traffic congestion contributing to increased travel times and the daily anxiety of Colorado commuters, the Cities of Centennial, Lone Tree, and Greenwood Village have begun to fight back "intelligently."

As a result, commuters traveling through the south metro area may begin to see their daily grind behind the wheel reduced as some signals adapt to better fit changing traffic patterns.

Leveraging Centennial's intricate system of underground fiber-optic cable, completed last year, the city is assessing the feasibility of an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) that will be made up of traffic vehicle sensors, signal controllers and a central management system that can track changing traffic

patterns in real time and make modifications when needed.

Centennial, Lone Tree, and Greenwood Village are collaborating on a pilot project along South Yosemite Street from Lincoln to Belleview Avenues, known as Project Mercury, to gather data on prevailing traffic patterns to see where improvements can be made.

South Yosemite Street has become a popular alternative to commuters attempting to avoid traffic along the South I-25 corridor, which has inadvertently created additional congestion choke points through each municipality. To date, sensors have been installed and are currently collecting data. According to Lone Tree City Manager Seth Hoffman, the system should be deployed soon after the 2019 holiday season.

Eventually, the south metro region envisages a broad deployment of the ITS that incorporates a wide-ranging spectrum of existing and new technologies, including broad-spectrum TV cameras, traffic sensors, and adaptive signal controllers that will help tackle traffic congestion throughout the area.

While the initial \$6 million investment to get the ITS master plan up and running is costly, it is still far cheaper than the prospect of adding additional lane miles.

It is exciting to see Colorado's municipalities harnessing the power of new technology to address chronic congestion issues. If these communities are successful, then smart technology may prove to be a practical solution that could be emulated across the state.

## Fisher's Peak to Become Colorado's Second-Largest State Park

*By Morgan Cullen, CML legislative and policy advocate, and Heather Stauffer, CML legislative and policy advocate*

At 9,633 feet, the iconic Fisher's Peak outside of Trinidad has always captivated the imaginations of the people in Las Animas County – if only from a distance.

That circumstance will now be a thing of the past, due to a massive land acquisition that took place last week among the State of Colorado, the City of Trinidad, the Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Lands, who together came up with the \$25.5 million to procure the privately held Crazy French Ranch.

The 19,200-acre ranch will become Colorado's second-largest state park and will provide access to the towering peak that adorns Trinidad's town logo. Once only accessible through New Mexico, the new state park will provide new campgrounds,



*Continued on page 2*

## In Memory

The League is saddened to report the passing of Lake City Town Clerk **Jamie Turrentine** on Sept. 4, after a battle with cancer. Turrentine had served the Town of Lake City as clerk since August 2015.

The League also mourns the passing of former Carbondale Mayor **Randy Vanderhurst**, who died on Sept. 7, shortly after being diagnosed with pneumonia and a malignancy. Vanderhurst served as mayor of Carbondale from 1995–2002, and as a trustee, prior to his time as mayor.

## Governor Announces Appointments to the Regional Air Quality Council

Donald McLeod, Severance mayor, and Steve Douglas, Commerce City councilmember, will join Kendra Black, Denver councilmember; Jackie Millet, Lone Tree mayor; Gregg Thomas, Denver Department of Public Health and Environment Environmental Quality division director; Casey Tighe, Jefferson County commissioner; and Stacy Suniga, Greeley councilmember, as local government representatives serving on the Regional Air Quality Council.

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a visitor center, and a trail system that will allow visitors to summit the majestic mountaintop from right here in Colorado.

For the City of Trinidad, this is a dream come true which came to fruition after many years of hard work, advocacy, and collaboration among all the stakeholders involved. While the site had been on the radar of conservation groups for years, the vision to turning the land into a public asset only became a reality after Trinidad city leaders began contacting them in 2017.

For Trinidad Mayor Phil Rico, the preservation of Fisher's Peak cannot be understated and it really gets to the heart of his city's identity. "The namesake of this extraordinary landmark can be found on many of our town's businesses and even one of our elementary schools, so this means everything to me and, I believe, everyone else in the community."

For Trinidad Councilmember and CML Executive Board Member Carlos López, the economic prospects of a new state park

fewer than seven miles south of town is also very promising. "This is a tremendous opportunity both for Trinidad and Las Animas County, as the region works to gain a larger foothold into Colorado's \$62.5 billion recreation economy," he said. "I am extremely excited about what this will mean, both for our town and the additional employment possibilities for our residents."

The new state park will further solidify a robust inventory of recreational assets in the region, including Trinidad Lake, two state wildlife areas and Sugarite Canyon State Park, just below the Colorado state line, in New Mexico. With the addition of the new state park, that is a total of 55½ miles of prime recreational real estate immediately adjacent to Interstate 25, making the area accessible to the general public.

With the demand for state parks on the rise across Colorado, the Governor's Office and the Department of Parks and Wildlife hope to have the new state park fully open to the public by January 2021.

## Incorporating Land Use Practices into Water Efficiency Plans

Are you a municipal water provider, a consultant, or someone in a position to write, guide or approve Water Efficiency Plans? Water Education Colorado and the Colorado Municipal League invite you to join us for a free webinar on **Oct. 25**, 10–11 a.m. Visit [bit.ly/co-landuse-water-webinar](http://bit.ly/co-landuse-water-webinar) to register. This webinar will focus on opportunities, requirements, and new guidance for incorporating land use practices into water efficiency plans. Those interested in learning more can attend follow-up workshops around the state ([www.wateredco.org/lu-wep](http://www.wateredco.org/lu-wep)).

Hear from Kevin Reidy, Colorado Water Conservation Board state water conservation specialist; Anne Castle, University of Colorado Boulder Energy and the Environment Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources senior fellow; and Erin Rugland, Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy research fellow.

A municipality will provide a case study from the field. Discussions will include how to overcome the challenge of working with different organizations to support water efficiency through land use.



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## CML Welcomes New Family Member



Congratulations to Legislative and Policy Advocate Meghan Dollar and her husband Kyle on the birth of their son, Jack Richard Dollar. He was born on Aug. 15, weighing 6 pounds, 12 ounces, and measuring 19½ inches. Mom, dad, and baby are doing well!

## Mayors Gather at Colorado State Fair

By Pueblo Mayor Nick Gradisar

On Aug. 3, 25 mayors from around the state gathered in Pueblo for Mayor's Day at the Colorado State Fair. It was a fantastic turnout and each mayor attending received a welcome package of Pueblo Salsa and Solar Roast coffee in a soft-sided cooler. The event was sponsored by the Colorado State Fair and

Black Hills Energy. Half of the mayors had never been to the State Fair.

Mayors were able to take advantage of the free activities at the fair, and those with strong stomachs attended the "Slopper" eating contest which established a new world record. The winner ate 28 sloppers in eight minutes.

Plans are underway for next year's Mayor's Day, which promises to be bigger and better.



## Colorado Broadband and Communications Conference

The Colorado Broadband and Communications Conference (CBCcon) will take place **Oct. 10** in Littleton. CBCcon is a cost-effective local government-focused conference on broadband law and policy, cable and wireless policy and regulation, technology initiatives and advancements, the power of public relations, crisis communications, and marketing and video production.

One session of particular interest to local officials focuses on media training. Today's media atmosphere is ever-changing. As elected officials and government staff, we see

the effects of smaller staff at the larger media outlets and less-experienced reporters having more of a presence throughout the state. Combine these factors with the competitive media atmosphere, and we have the makings of very challenging situations for elected officials and their staffs. Knowing how best to meet the information needs of your community, while also managing the ways in which your messages are communicated with/to the media, is a challenge.

To register, visit [bit.ly/2mjUDAu](http://bit.ly/2mjUDAu), and for a full agenda, visit [bit.ly/2msMYQD](http://bit.ly/2msMYQD).

## Ignacio Trustee to Serve on CML Executive Board



Sharon Craig, Town of Ignacio trustee, was appointed to the Colorado Municipal League (CML) Executive Board to fill a vacancy in the small municipality category.

"We are excited to have Ignacio Trustee Sharon Craig as a member of our Board," said CML Executive Board President and Alamosa Mayor Pro Tem Liz Hensley. "Sharon brings a wealth of experience as a small business owner, and through her involvement with the Ignacio Chamber Board and La Plata Economic Development Alliance."

## CML Releases New Urban Renewal Publication

Urban renewal is one of the most important tools cities and towns in Colorado have for revitalization, redevelopment, and economic development. *Urban Renewal*, a new publication by CML, provides a clear explanation of the law and other topics related to urban renewal, including an overview of tax increment finance and a brief chapter on downtown development authorities.

The principal author is well-known Boulder-based urban renewal attorney Paul Benedetti, who is one of the foremost experts on the topic. Additional authors include: David M. Neville, Kraemer Kendall Rupp Deen Neville LLC; Graham T. Anderson, Anderson Analytics LLC; and Dee Wisor, Butler Snow LLP. CML extends its gratitude to each author for his/her work on producing our newest publication.

While the publication should not be taken as legal advice, we believe you will find it to be a valuable resource.

One copy of the publication was sent to all member municipalities. Additional printed copies of *Urban Renewal* may be purchased from CML at [www.cml.org](http://www.cml.org). The publication is also available for download in PDF format.

CML continues to produce reference guides and best practices publications addressing key issues facing Colorado municipalities. For a complete list of CML publications, visit [www.cml.org](http://www.cml.org).

# 2019 CML Mayors' Summit

Nov. 15, 2019  
At the CML Building  
To register, visit [www.cml.org](http://www.cml.org)

- 8:30–8:45 A.M.**      **Welcome and Overview of CML Services**  
*Kevin Bommer, CML executive director*  
Learn more about the variety of services CML offers, including advocacy, engagement, training, research, information, and legal services.
- 8:45–10 A.M.**      **Finding Solutions to Colorado's Transportation Challenges Through State and Local Partnerships**  
*Mike Timlin, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Bustang operations manager; Margaret Bowes, I-70 Coalition director; Heather Paddock, CDOT Region 4 transportation director; Mark Jackson, Loveland public works director*  
With seemingly insurmountable funding challenges at every level of government, state and local leaders have started taking a regional approach toward solving some of the state's biggest transportation projects. This session will look at strategic partnerships and funding mechanisms to make collaborative transportation projects possible.
- 10:15–11:30 A.M.**      **Creative Strategies for Workforce/Affordable Housing**  
*Meghan Dollar, Colorado Municipal League legislative and policy advocate; Elena Wilken, Housing Colorado executive director; Alison George, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) Division of Housing director; Karen Kallenberg, Habitat for Humanity Colorado executive director*  
Join this group of public and private leaders to learn more about developing creative solutions to workforce and affordable housing challenges in your community.
- 11:30 A.M. – 1 P.M.**      **Networking Lunch**  
Take this opportunity to sit down with your fellow mayors and learn more about challenges and triumphs happening throughout the state.
- 1–1:45 P.M.**      **Effective Meetings**  
*Bob Widner, Centennial city attorney and CML Executive Board vice president*  
Running a meeting is not easy. Gain knowledge about how to step up to the challenge and make your meetings effective and successful.
- 1:45–2:30 P.M.**      **Case Studies of the Appointee Evaluation Process**  
*Mark Deven, Arvada city manager; Mark McGoff, Arvada councilmember; Anita Seitz, Westminster mayor pro tem; Don Tripp, Westminster city manager*  
Elected officials in Arvada and Westminster will present their processes to conducting annual performance evaluations with their appointees. These processes are deliberative, require simultaneous input, create a learning experience, and help elected officials decide what is important. Appointees will share how these processes improve communication and provide invaluable feedback.
- 2:45–4 P.M.**      **Teambuilding Within the Council/Board**  
Join a panel of mayors from municipalities of various sizes throughout the state to learn more about effective techniques that have created high-functioning, team-oriented councils and boards.
- 4–4:45 P.M.**      **The Future of Water in Colorado**  
*Rebecca Mitchell, Colorado Water Conservation Board director*  
Water is crucial in Colorado. Learn about the state water plan and its impact on the future of water in Colorado.
- 4:45–5 P.M.**      **Wrap Up and Evaluation**

## Research Corner: State of the Nation's Housing

By Melissa Mata, CML municipal research analyst

In August 2019, the Harvard University Joint Center for Housing Studies (JCHS) released its 2019 State of the Nation's Housing Report. Senior Research Associate and lead author, Daniel McCue, summarized the report with the following ten key takeaways:

- The slow rebound in construction has resulted in a nationwide shortage of housing.
  - Reasons for the stagnant construction include a wariness of speculative development following the housing boom in the early 2000s, labor shortages, high land prices, and regulatory constraints and local opposition to higher-density development.
- Housing affordability continues to be a key challenge.
  - In 2017, nearly a third of all households in the US were considered cost-burdened because they spent more than 30% of their incomes on housing. Additionally, roughly 15% were severely cost-burdened because they spent over half their incomes on housing.
- Cost burdens are no longer just a problem for low-income renters.
  - Though households with incomes under \$15,000 continue to have the highest burden rates nationwide, in the nation's 25 highest-rent markets, some 46% of renter households with incomes of \$45,000–\$74,999 were cost-burdened in 2017.
- Millennials drove new household growth, although many are still living with their parents.
  - The share of young adults living in their parents' or grandparents' homes hit a new high of 22.8% in 2017, nearly double the 12.1% in 2000, as high rents delay the ability of younger adults to form independent households. With millions of millennials moving into their prime homebuying years, however, demand for smaller, more affordable homes seems poised for a surge.
- Demand for homeownership has returned, but the black–white homeownership gap has widened.
  - The gap between black and white homeownership rates is higher than it has been in at least three decades.
- Home prices are rising faster than incomes.
  - Although real median household incomes rose by 17% between 2011 and 2017, real median home prices rose by 42% in that time.
- In many metros, very few homes are affordable to the typical renter.
  - In 63 metros (including Denver), the median renter household could afford less than a quarter of recently sold homes.
- Although overall rental demand declined, pressures at both the high and low ends kept rental markets tight.
  - Even though the total number of renters declined in 2018, the number of high-income renter households grew significantly, which drove up rents, drove down vacancy rates, and sustained demand for multifamily construction. At the same time, the supply of low-cost rental units has shrunk dramatically, tightening markets and exacerbating affordability problems for low-income renters.
- For the first time in seven years, the number of people experiencing homelessness has risen.
  - The increase was driven by a rise in the unsheltered homeless population, which rose by 2.3% over the past year, and is now up by 12.2% since 2015. The increases were particularly notable in several high-cost Western states, including Colorado.
- Highly damaging natural disasters are getting more frequent and costly.
  - According to NOAA, there were 14 natural disasters in 2018 which caused at least \$1 billion in damage, following 16 such events in 2017, which combined equals more storms in two years than occurred throughout the entirety of the 1980s. Homeowner outlays for disaster-related improvements have doubled in real terms from \$7 billion per year in the late 1990s, to \$14 billion per year so far in the 2010s.

Founded in 1959, JCHS advances understanding of housing issues and informs policy. Through its research, education, and public outreach programs, the Center helps leaders in government, business, and the civic sectors make decisions that effectively address the needs of cities and communities. For the full report and access to interactive maps and resources, please visit [www.jchs.harvard.edu/state-nations-housing-2019](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/state-nations-housing-2019).



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