



Focus shifts from American Rescue Plan to infrastructure



By Kevin Bommer, CML executive director

Now that all Colorado municipalities have received or will shortly receive the first half of American Rescue Plan (ARP), funding CML and the National League of Cities (NLC) are focusing on infrastructure conversations in Washington, D.C. CML will be similarly focused on interim discussions in Colorado, as legislative leaders and the Governor's office contemplate how to allocate the remaining \$1.8 billion of state ARP money.

In Washington, NLC has been working with the bipartisan Senate group over the past few weeks to develop legislative text around the compromise that was recently announced by President Joe Biden. Sen. John Hickenlooper is part of that bipartisan group, and Sen. Michael Bennet will play a key role as a member of the Senate Finance Committee. The key message to members of Congress from both NLC and CML has been to streamline infrastructure investment by directing it to the asset

owners at the local level and eliminating circuitous and inefficient bureaucratic processes. Informing the discussion is a comprehensive infrastructure priorities letter that NLC recently sent. The letter can be viewed at bit.ly/36wc7xm.

Initial draft language is possible in coming days, and Senate leaders could bring a bill forward as soon as July 19. However, given some of the cross currents coming from House leadership about a second bill that would not be bipartisan, the chance that the bipartisan bill would move quickly seems small. Should House Speaker Nancy Pelosi insist on pushing more expansive secondary legislation with a higher price tag and trying to pass it though budget reconciliation, it could shatter the bipartisan Senate process.

In the short term, municipal leaders are encouraged to contact Colorado's senators and provide support for the bipartisan work. Sharing with them information about local infrastructure needs and funding gaps will help inform their work. For questions or more information, contact Kevin Bommer, CML executive director, at kbommer@cml.org.

Governor Jared Polis signs House Bill 21-1162 into law



Local leaders pose with bill sponsors - Broomfield Councilmember Heidi Henkel, Lafayette Mayor Jamie Harkins, Avon Mayor Sarah Smith Hymes, Eagle County Commissioner Matt Scherr.

By Meghan MacKillop, CML legislative and policy advocate

On Tuesday, July 6, Gov. Polis signed HB21-1162, the Plastic Reduction Act. CML staff was in attendance along with mayors Jamie Harkins (Lafayette) and Sarah Smith Hymes (Avon), and councilmember Heidi Henkel (Broomfield). The passage of this bill is a huge win for local governments, as the bill repeals the preemption of local governments' ability to manage plastic products beginning in 2024. The bill also institutes a fee on paper and single-use

plastic bags beginning in 2023, and an outright ban on plastic bags in 2024. The bill also creates restrictions on the use of Styrofoam products in restaurants beginning in 2024. Small stores and restaurants are excluded from the provisions of the bill, and local governments have the authority to choose whether and how to enforce the provisions in the bill. Keep a lookout for more information on how this bill will impact your community from CML staff in the coming months!



Member news

New Associate Members

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BerryDunn is a nationally recognized independent management and information technology (IT) consulting firm. Focused on inspiring organizations to transform and innovate, our firm's culture is centered on a deep understanding of our clients' commitment to serving the public. BerryDunn provides a full range of professional services tailored to local governments and communities both within Colorado and nationally.

Colorado Department of Local Affairs launches new rental assistance website, awards \$6.025 million in affordable housing

The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) Division of Housing (DOH) published a new website to simplify obtaining emergency rental assistance as well as upcoming homeowner relief, and awarded \$6.025 million through the Colorado State Housing Board (SHB) for affordable housing in June.

DOH has thousands of emergency rental assistance applications that need to be completed by landlords, tenants, or both. This new website is easier to navigate for new and returning applicants to complete the process and get the help they need.

The federal Homeownership Assistance Fund (HAF) through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) is providing Colorado \$175.08 million to address homeownership needs throughout the state. DOH is developing a plan to administer the HAF funds and require public feedback to help prioritize funding for homeowners who have faced housing challenges because of the COVID-19 pandemic. DOLA is seeking input from all Coloradans in a survey that is now open both in English and Spanish. Additionally the below projects received funding awards:

- DOH awarded Homeward Pikes Peak and Dominion \$1.5 million for construction of The Commons in Colorado Springs, a 50-unit supportive housing development for homeless families and veterans, with various services and case management available to individuals in need.
- Animas View Mobile Home Park Co-op received \$1.8 million for acquisition and infrastructure

improvements of the Riverview Mobile Home Park in Durango, Colorado. Residents of the park formed the cooperative corporation to purchase the park under a single entity between them after they were informed that the park would be sold otherwise.

- Four Corners Development received \$945,000 to assist with the construction of Highland Trails, an 88-unit, 4-story mix of one- and two-bedroom units in unincorporated Jefferson County reserved for seniors who are over 55 with incomes between 20% and 80% of the area median income (AMI).
- Commonwealth Development Corporation received \$500,000 for construction of the new 77-unit Village at Solid Rock, consisting of one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments on underutilized church property in Colorado Springs. The project is part of Interfaith Alliance of Colorado's Congregation Land Campaign, which seeks to pair faith groups with experienced developers to meet community housing needs.
- Maiker Housing Partners received \$1.1 million for the construction of Crossing Pointe South in Thornton, two four-story buildings with 142 apartments for families and individuals with incomes between 30% and 70% of the AMI.
- Chaffee Housing Trust received \$180,000 to assist with the construction of the M&3rd project in Salida, six units of rental and for-purchase housing open to families with incomes below 80% of the AMI. For complete information, visit bit.ly/2O5aiCf.



COLORADO MUNICIPAL LEAGUE NEWSLETTER

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Get this newsletter by email. The CML Newsletter is available by email three days before it arrives in the mail! Sign up at bit.ly/CMLNewsletter.

CML says goodbye to Forehand

Training and Marketing Specialist Courtney Forehand is leaving CML on July 15. We thank Courtney for her work developing training programs; working with webinar speakers; creating CML's Statehouse Report and other videos; and working with Associate Members, exhibitors, sponsors, and advertisers over the last 19 months. We wish Courtney well in her new endeavors!

The training and marketing specialist position is currently open (see job announcement on page 3). Until the position is filled, all training, Associate Member, exhibitor, sponsor, and advertiser inquiries should be sent to Sarah Werner at swerner@cml.org.

City and County of Denver partners with the National League of Cities to help build equitable economic mobility for all Denver residents

Denver Economic Development & Opportunity (DEDO) is proud to announce its selection to the Equitable Economic Mobility Initiative (EEMI), a 15-month technical assistance and grant project led by the National League of Cities (NLC) aimed at boosting economic mobility for residents while addressing long-standing racial inequalities. Denver was selected for its proposed Take the Wheel project.

The Take the Wheel project will focus on financial inclusion and empowerment. The project's goal is to promote entrepreneurship to help historically marginalized communities build wealth for their families over generations. This is critical to Denver's economic mobility goals because currently, access to opportunities to start a business are not equitable in Denver's BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities lacking access to capital and financial resources. Take the Wheel will create pathways and remove barriers to increase the chances for small family-owned businesses to thrive. The primary constituency for this program is small BIPOC family-owned business owners whose revenues are less than \$500,000; who can show that during the pandemic, they lost revenue; and who

operate out of any of Denver's priority historic and fast-changing neighborhoods.

Upon finalizing the memorandum of understanding with the grantor, Denver expects to receive \$25,000 for the first phase of the project. An additional \$75,000 could be granted for a total of up to \$100,000 once Phase 1 is successfully completed.

"It is an honor to have our work recognized by the National League of Cities and to have them fund this important initiative," said Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock. "Equity is the platform of all our priorities as an administration and Take the Wheel puts that value into action by providing meaningful opportunities for our residents."

Far beyond any previous recession, the economic fallout from COVID-19 decimated many families' financial stability and economic security while upending many community norms. What's more, health and economic indicators point to the pandemic's disproportionate impact on people of color, worsening existing inequalities.

DEDO, and specifically its Neighborhood and Stabilization Team (NEST) under the City and County of Denver, was selected for the initiative because of its demonstrated commitment to racial equity and resident

economic mobility, along with the strong existing partnerships and the city's capacity for data collection and analysis. Denver is one of seven other cities from across the country to receive technical assistance and support from NLC's expert staff to help advance the city's efforts in promoting economic mobility for all residents.

In the months ahead, EEMI cities will explore finding culturally appropriate ways to engage with residents on the issue of economic mobility with the ultimate goal of moving more residents towards wealth building.

"Many local governments are investing in programs that help people meet their basic needs, but few examine how existing systems can be improved to help families build wealth," said Dr. Robert Blaine, senior executive and director of the Institute for Youth, Education and Families at the National League of Cities. "The National League of Cities is proud to work with the City and County of Denver in its efforts to address long-standing racial inequality and help promote the inherent dignity of each of its residents by expanding opportunities for economic mobility within the community."

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation generously supports the Equitability Economic Mobility Initiative.

Join the CML team



CML is actively seeking passionate and talented candidates to fill our Training and Marketing Specialist position. This position develops and markets training programs, including identifying topics and procuring speakers, as well as coordinating and maintaining an annual training calendar. This position also coordinates CML's Associate Member and advertiser programs. This includes maintaining a positive working

relationship with existing Associate Members and advertisers to ensure that their needs are met, along with seeking additional Associate Members and advertisers whose services benefit municipal governments. Additionally, this position works with other members of the Engagement and Communications Team to edit, design, and produce publications including books, periodicals, advertisements and other items and is responsible for video production for training, marketing and educational purposes.

Our successful candidate will be a team player and relationship builder, possess high moral and ethical standards, and have strong understanding and experience in developing training programs, video editing and production, and working with sponsors and associates.

This position requires a bachelor's degree with a major in marketing, journalism,

communications, computer graphics & production, or related field (experience may substitute for degree on a year-by-year basis), as well as a minimum of three (3) years of experience in a closely-related field coordinating training or advertising programs. Proficiency in desktop publishing and strong writing, editing, and video production skills are also required. Experience in local government is preferred.

Salary range: \$43,100–\$62,500. Hiring range is \$43,100–\$52,800, depending on experience and qualifications. CML offers an excellent benefits package. Please submit a letter of interest along with a resume, references, and salary requirements by midnight **Monday, July 26, 2021** to: Sarah Werner, Engagement and Communications Manager, swerner@cml.org. The Colorado Municipal League is an equal opportunity employer.

Revitalizing Main Streets update



On June 17, Gov. Jared Polis signed SB21-260, Sustainability Of The Transportation System, into law at a bill signing event held at the base of Floyd Hill along I-70. Expanding the Revitalizing Main Streets Grant Program was one of many pieces of this comprehensive funding package. This signing follows the March 19 signing of SB21-110, which allocated \$30 million in economic stimulus funding for the Revitalizing Main Streets program. This created two grant opportunities: Larger Safety Infrastructure Grants and Small Multimodal & Economic Resiliency Grants. The Larger Safety Infrastructure Grants opportunity closed on May 14, 2021. CDOT received 72 grant submissions for this opportunity and is currently reviewing submissions, with awards distributed this summer.

The Small Multimodal & Economic Resiliency Grants opportunity is still open for applicants.

Communities can apply for up to \$250,000, available on a rolling basis. As of the end of June 2021, \$5.2 million was still available in this pool of funding (out of the \$8 million allocated from state economic stimulus funding.) More information regarding how to apply can be found below and on CDOT's website at bit.ly/3xzZNbu.

As of June 30, 2021, the total number of Revitalizing Main Streets grant awards is 109 projects statewide and growing. Awarded projects span the entire state, from Denver and Boulder to Hugo and Limon to Frisco and Rifle. A full list of recipients to date is available at bit.ly/3e6p3yr. Highlights include numerous projects facilitating safe pedestrian access to outdoor dining, improved lighting, sidewalk repair, incorporating "parklets" into streetscapes, and much more. See below for recent grant awardees:

Town of Lyons—Award | \$149,999

Project: Lyons Main Street (US 36) Lighting Improvements

Activate the Main Street and 4th Avenue corridor with bollard lighting to improve safety with bike/pedestrian mobility, engage the community, and enhance the local economy. In addition to new bollard lighting, ambient string lighting will help activate the businesses by providing more access and opportunities for businesses that have outdoor seating and sidewalk displays.

Town of Georgetown—Award | \$100,000

Project: Georgetown Streetscape Project

Activate public park space in the Historic Commercial District by adding tables, chairs, and a public restroom. The park amenities will be open for outdoor dining and relaxing. No public restrooms currently exist in this area, so adding the restroom will make the downtown space more user-friendly and hygienic for those shopping, dining, and enjoying Georgetown.

Town of Springfield—Award | \$54,200

Project: Pedestrian Streetscape Advance

Activate Springfield's Main Street Vision by adding streetscape to US 287, including planters, benches, trash cans, bike racks, and tables/chairs to the downtown area to help slow traffic, increase safety, and encourage more bike and pedestrian users. These measures will welcome locals while also encouraging thru traffic to stop and shop in Springfield.

Town of Wellington—Award | \$149,999

Project: Downtown Wellington Improvement and Pedestrian Safety Initiative

Purchase and install a series of equipment to address pedestrian safety, accessibility, and the health of visitors and residents in downtown Wellington. Improvements include directional lighting, waste bins, park

benches, tables, bottle-filling stations, and bike racks.

Town of Fraser—Award | \$96,749

Project: Fraser Community Park

Add permanent seating, shade structures, and bike infrastructure to a parcel of land that was converted to a temporary gathering place in downtown Fraser during COVID-19. This will help the space to become a more-permanent fixture that will be accessed by residents and visitors looking for outdoor space and using the biking and hiking trails nearby.

Town of New Castle—Award | \$57,994

Project: Guardrail Safety Enhancement

Improve safety along a multimodal trail by replacing a section of guardrail where the trail nears a curve in the highway. The trail connects cyclists and pedestrians safely from their homes to fundamental services such as employment, medical care, shopping, and mass transportation.

Town of Buena Vista—Award | \$149,999

Project: Streetlight Replacement Project

Replace all of the aging and inoperable street lights along Main Street. In response to COVID-19 concerns, more residents and visitors have been frequenting downtown for daily outdoor activity. In one way or another, everyone frequents this part of town for commerce, people watching, passive outdoor recreation, and other uses including physical minimum spacing.

West Colfax BID | \$44,700

Project: Under the Colfax Viaduct Community Night Markets

Create a community space, night market and mobility improvements below the Colfax Viaduct. The night market with live music is designed to create economic opportunities for local food vendors. Illuminated artwork, bike parking, and wayfinding to reach the event space will draw residents to the market and establish the area under the viaduct as part of area active transportation routes.

Horizon Drive District | \$136,866

Project: Horizon Drive Street Furniture

Project improve active transportation infrastructure in five locations within CDOT right-of-way along the Maroon Bike Route. The project builds on the successful wayfinding signage installed in 2020 by installing benches with tables, shade structures, trash receptacles, bike

Continued from page 4...Revitalizing Main Streets update

racks, a bike fix-it station, bike air pump, a stretching station, wayfinding signage, and a large covered outdoor dining area.

City of Colorado Springs—Award | \$149,999

Project: Support the installation of nine additional PikeRide e-bike stations

PikeRide is the nation's first year-round all-electric-assist bike share program. The purchase of 90 electric-assist bike share bikes will increase station density in Colorado Springs neighborhoods, providing better connectivity to Mountain Metro Transit, grocery stores, and high density employment/retail areas from neighborhoods.

Town of Eaton—Award | \$50,000

Project: Place benches along the main

street area, along with self-watering planters, an additional parklet, bump-outs for safety, bike racks, wayfinding and signage

The parklets will be located on the downtown First Street, which is where the town square is located. The bump-outs will be placed at the intersection of 1st and Elm St. which it has been noted as a hazardous crossing for pedestrians.

City of Las Animas—Award | \$85,800

Project: Provide multimodal options (walking/biking) for local residents to enjoy the downtown business district in a safe and healthy environment

Purchase sheds, barriers, solar lights, tents, tables, chairs, stage, decking, solar light posts, potted trees, and more to create an out exercise.

Apply for Community Grant Funding for Bicycle Infrastructure

PeopleForBikes is seeking applicants for its Community Grant Program that supports bicycle infrastructure projects and initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to ride.

Examples of past projects include:

- bike paths, lanes, trails, and bridges;
- end-of-trip facilities, like bike racks, bike parking, bike repair stations, and bike storage; and
- programs that transform city streets, like Open Streets Days. Applications, in the form of a letter of interest, are due on July 23, 2021. Visit bit.ly/3r1fjkg to learn more and apply.



Effectively Engaging Diverse Communities July 22, noon to 1 p.m.

The challenging past year has prompted

a newly intense focus on a perennially important issue: how to make Colorado communities more equitable and inclusive for racially and ethnically diverse populations. Effective engagement is key, but that requires adapting messages, mediums, and even language to reach different communities. Two veteran Colorado communicators share their experiences and offer helpful best practices you can put to use in your community. Register at bit.ly/2TsHPiG.

Smart Cities 101 - Elements of Smart Government, July 27, noon to 1 p.m.

In this two webinar series (7/27 and 7/29), learn from the executive director of Colorado Smart Cities Alliance, Tyler Svitak, and municipal leaders about what makes your government smart and eight concrete strategies you can implement to make yours

smarter. These panels will blend theory and real-world examples to move "Smart Cities" from a buzzword to on-the-ground action in Colorado cities and towns like yours. Register at bit.ly/3kctStU.

Local Government Clean Energy Funding Listening Sessions with CEO Tuesday, July 27, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

North Central and Central Regions register at bit.ly/3hW9Vvk.

Wednesday, July 28, noon to 1 p.m.

Northeastern and Southeastern Regions, register at bit.ly/3xDcn9P.

The Colorado Energy Office would like to hear from local government staff and elected officials on your clean energy funding priorities from both state and federal stimulus dollars. Will Toor, executive director of the Colorado Energy Office (CEO), will provide a brief overview of energy legislation that passed this session as well as the potential for state and federal programs to accelerate energy efficiency and renewable energy at the local level. To determine how best to invest this funding, CEO is inviting municipal staff and elected officials to participate in virtual listening sessions in the month of July. If you are unable to attend the listening

sessions or have questions, please email CEO directly at christine.berg@state.co.us.

CML Fall district meetings

CML is excited to announce that we will be holding this year's Fall District Meetings in person! Save the date for this valuable training and networking opportunity where we will discuss upcoming legislation and topics of interest to your district. We can't wait to see and hear from you!

All meetings begin at 4 p.m. with a business meeting, followed by social hour at 5:30 p.m. and dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Find a list of municipalities in each district at bit.ly/3AmVouo.

District meeting schedule

Aug. 31 District 10 – Gunnison

Sept. 1 District 3 – Thornton

Sept. 1 District 5 – Limon

Sept. 2 District 6 – La Junta

Sept. 9 District 1 – Akron

Sept. 14 District 8 – La Jara

Sept. 14 District 13 – Rockvale

Sept. 15 District 2 – Kersey

Sept. 27 District 4 – Victor

Oct. 6 Districts 7 and 14 – Trinidad

Oct. 7 District 9 – Mancos

Oct. 13 District 11 – Rangely

Oct. 14 District 12 – Aspen

CML LEGAL CORNER



How recent changes to the law will affect property taxes in your community



By David W. Broadwell, CML
general counsel

Three important changes to state laws governing property taxes will affect municipal tax collections as well as collections by all of the other taxing districts that serve your community. How much of an effect will depend on a host of factors unique to your community, particularly the mix of residential and non-residential property and the rate at which property values in general are increasing in your area.

Going up: School district mill levies

In the 1990s voters in almost every school district in Colorado approved a "de-Brucing" ballot question that should have allowed those districts to keep and spend any and all revenues derived from their existing mill levy rates. However, the Colorado Department of Education at the time forced these districts to reduce their levies annually to stay within TABOR revenue caps, as if the de-Brucing votes never happened.

In 2006, the General Assembly partially addressed this error by allowing districts to "freeze" their mill levies at then-current rates. This year, the General Assembly took the next step. Via the adoption of HB21-1164, many school districts will be able to gradually restore their mill levies to their 1990s level. Since this proposal was potentially controversial under the TABOR amendment, the General Assembly asked the Colorado Supreme Court if it would be legal to restore the levies without going

back to the voters for permission in each district. In a May decision, the court gave a green light to the legislation.

The impact of the legislation on local taxpayers and on school district revenues will increase over time, starting with a statewide increase of nearly \$100 million in new revenue in FY 21-22 and going up every year from there.

Going down: Assessment ratios

When the General Assembly referred a measure to the November 2020 ballot calling for a repeal of the so-called "Gallagher Amendment," the measure also implemented an open-ended moratorium on any further reduction in the assessment ratios that determine how much of your property value gets taxed. In effect, this meant that the approval of the ballot measure would freeze the existing assessment ratios. Residential property is taxed at 7.15 % of its actual value while non-residential property is taxed at 29% of its actual value.

The "moratorium" lasted exactly one year. In the waning days of the 2021 legislative session, the General Assembly adopted SB21-293. This legislation temporarily reduces the residential assessment ratio for single family residences to 6.95% and for multi-family properties to 6.80%. On the non-residential side, the ratio is reduced for agricultural land and property used to produce renewable energy to 26.40%. These reductions will only apply for the next two years, and then the ratios will bounce back to current levels.

The estimated statewide reduction in local property tax revenue in each of the next two years is estimated to be approximately \$200 million per year.

SB21-293 was designed, in large part, to blunt the effects of a potential initiative that may appear on the November 2021

statewide ballot. The initiated measure proposes a much more severe and potentially permanent reduction in the assessment ratios across the board and would result in a statewide reduction in local property taxes of \$1 billion per year.

Again, the impacts of reducing the assessment ratios in any particular community depend on circumstances on the ground. For example, in recent years many local taxing districts (including a few municipalities) have obtained voter approval to float their mill levies upwards whenever the assessment ratios go down, in order to at least keep their revenue constant.

Going down: Business personal property tax

When TABOR was adopted in 1992, it gave the state or any local taxing district the authority to exempt business personal property (i.e. things like machinery, equipment and fixtures) from the mill levies that would normally apply. Over the years, the state has often debated reducing or even completely eliminating this tax, especially due to its impact on small businesses. Until this year, the state went no further than adopting exemptions for small amounts of business personal property.

One provision in an omnibus tax reform bill adopted this year—HB21-1312—is now increasing the exemption from \$7,900 to \$50,000 in property value. This change is expected to save taxpayers approximately \$19 million per year. The best news for municipalities and other local governments: the state will backfill the lost revenue annually based on a formula set forth in the legislation.

Note: This column is not intended and should not be taken as legal advice. Municipal officials are always encouraged to consult with their own attorneys

Research Corner: Colorado's municipalities by the numbers



The numbers tell a story of resiliency, adaptation, and dedication to providing continued service to CML members and they to their citizens and businesses.



Colorado population¹
5,763,976



Residents who live in cities/towns¹
4,284,908



City/town manager/
administrator
180



Mayors, council
members and trustees
1,830



Home rule municipalities
103
Residents living in home
rule municipalities¹
3,998,963



Statutory municipalities
168
Residents living in statutory
municipalities¹
284,835



Territorial charter towns
1
Residents in territorial
charter town¹
1,110



Municipal members
270



Largest municipality¹
Denver
729,239



Smallest municipality¹
Lakeside
8

Taxes



Municipalities with
a local sales tax
224



Municipalities that
self-collect tax
70



Assessed valuation of
property in municipalities¹
\$90B



Total Colorado property
tax assessment¹
66.4%



Highest tax rate²
7.0%



Lowest tax rate²
1.0%



503 of 581
revenue retention
questions passed¹



712 of 1158
municipal tax or tax rate
questions passed¹



321 of 461
debt and obligation
questions passed¹

¹Since 1993

¹ Colorado Department of Local Affairs, ² Colorado Department of Revenue.





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NEWSLETTER

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