



# THORNTON

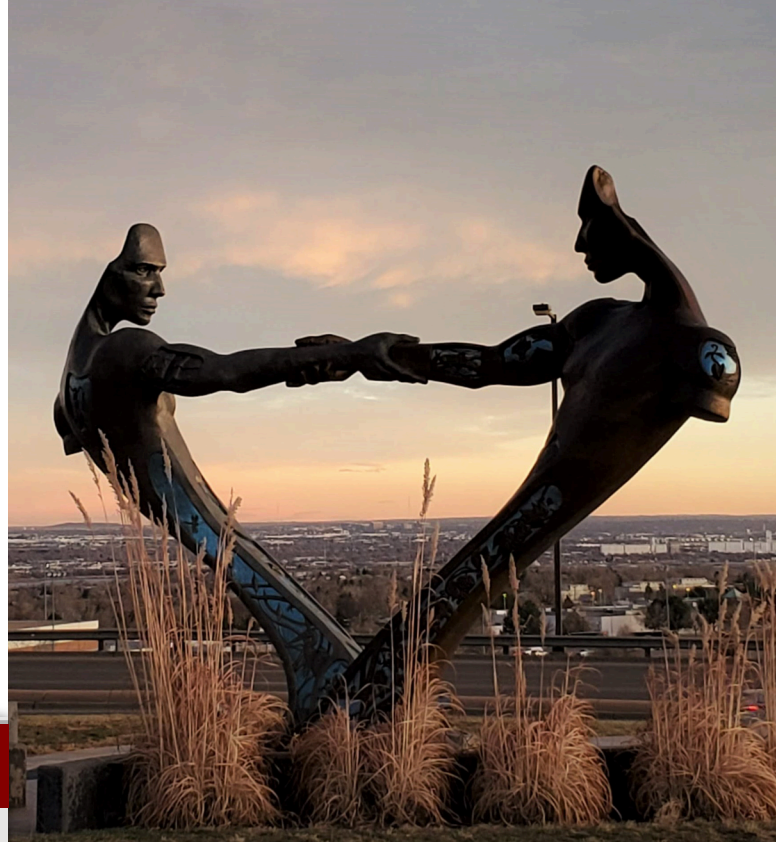
## COLORADO

— POSITION AVAILABLE —

CITY MANAGER  
Apply by June 7, 2024

With the stunning Rocky Mountains as a backdrop, Thornton is a Denver suburb that combines the warmth of a close-knit community with the energy of a bustling urban center. Residents are welcoming, assist one another, truly care about their community, and enjoy an exceptional quality of life. Consistently ranked as one of the most desirable areas to live in the U.S., Thornton has easy access to over 28 major resort areas, and is a paradise for those who relish adventure—skiing, hiking, rafting, and camping, just to name a few. Thornton is an oasis in the mountains with friendly neighbors, a plethora of parks, and more amenities than you’ve ever dreamed.

Livability.com lists Thornton as one of the top 100 best places to live in the US for 2023. In 2017 LiveWell Colorado awarded Elite status to the city of Thornton for its commitment to building a healthy community. It was named the Large Community of the Year by the Economic Development Council of Colorado in 2017. Other designations include Tree City USA, Play City, National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) Gold Medal Finalist, and World Health Organization (WHO) Age Friendly City.



Located just under ten miles from downtown Denver, Thornton offers over 140 miles of trails and 2500+ acres of designated park land, where residents have endless opportunities for recreation. The city has 25 major parks with the addition of several smaller parks and open spaces. Carpenter Park has an amphitheater, boathouse and carousel, courts, pavilions, playground, skatepark, and a sprayground (a playground with both water and electronic controls). The Springvale Park Disc Golf Course is a popular destination. With over a dozen lakes and ponds in the community, fishing is a favored pastime. Those who love to camp have endless opportunities just outside city limits and in the nearby Rocky Mountains.

Thornton hosts several annual festivals. Thorntontfest was introduced in 1996 to celebrate the community and is an opportunity for residents to get to know their neighbors. Harvest Fest helps residents celebrate autumn with their neighbors. WinterFest includes visits from Santa, ice carving demonstrations, an ice-skating pond, and much more. Other events planned for 2024 include Eggcessible Eggstravaganza, Law Enforcement Torch Run/Walk, Lion Club Relays, Allstar Concert Series, Arts in the Parks, Bicycle Rodeo, Movies in the Park, Fourth of July Celebration, Paws for a Dip, Barrel & Beer Festival, Fuel & Fury Car Show, Trunk or Treat, and the Day of the Dead celebration.

Thornton offers very robust recreational programming for residents of all ages. Opportunities for youth include softball, tennis, track and field, Taekwondo, gymnastics, swimming, dance, and fishing as well as numerous youth sports academies. The City also partners with Skyhawks and SuperTots to offer in-person, multi-day, sports camps for baseball, basketball, football, soccer, volleyball, golf, cheerleading and more. Adult softball and basketball leagues are also available. Thornton's Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation (AIR) program offers meaningful recreation opportunities for participants with disabilities.

Shopping is plentiful both in Thornton and in the region. The Denver Premium Outlets (located in Thornton) is a major shopping destination where shoppers can also enjoy a playground and fountain. Other shopping venues include the Colorado Marketplace, Highpointe Park, Hilltop Village, Huron Plaza, Lambertson Lakes, Larkridge, Mission Trace, Pinnacle Center, Plaza Las Americas, The Grove, Thorncreek Crossing,

Thornton Place, Thornton Plaza, Thornton Town Center, and the Washington Plaza. Not only does Thornton host two farmers' markets every week, but the City also provides either a \$25 voucher or a pre-packaged box of farm fresh food to anyone who receives SNAP, WIC, or Medicaid benefits, or is at least 65 years of age. Other farmers' markets are also available, including two that are hosted by Anythink Library.

To preserve and share the city's history, Thornton's Historical Archive and Art Collection is located at the Thornton Arts & Culture Center. The public can also view rotating displays of these collections at the Margaret Carpenter Recreation Center. The Adams County Historical Society in Brighton contains the History Museum & Office, Cultural Center, a replica one-room schoolhouse and 1930's Conoco Station, a working Blacksmith Shop, a firehouse, a restored 1887 two-story Victorian House, and a 1920 railroad caboose.

Entertainment abounds in this region. You can see more than 3,500 animals at the Denver Zoo, view spectacular marine life and enjoy an upscale-casual dining experience at the Downtown Aquarium in Denver, swim with stingrays at the SeaQuest in Littleton, visit the Butterfly Pavilion in Westminster, see breathtaking views and wildlife at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, and visit the Wildlife Animal Sanctuary where over 500 carnivores roam freely on 789 acres of grassland. Museums are plentiful and include the Denver Botanic Gardens, Denver Museum of Nature & Sciences, Denver Art Museum, Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum, National Ballpark Museum, Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art, the Forney Museum of Transportation and more.

For those who love performing arts, the construction of the Candlelight Theater in Thornton has been announced. Regionally, residents can find entertainment at The Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Colorado Ballet, Paramount Theater, The Robert and Judi Newman Center for the Performing Arts, and Su Teatro Cultural & Performing Arts Center.

Every sports fan can find a team to cheer for. The Denver metro area is home to many pro sports teams including the Denver Broncos (NFL), Denver Nuggets (NBA), Colorado Rockies (MLB), Colorado Avalanche (NHL), Colorado Rapids (MLS)

and the Colorado Mammoth (NLL). Local teams include the Denver Barbarians (RFC), American Raptors (Rugby Union Team), Colorado Summit (ultimate frisbee) and Colorado Rapids 2 which operates as a reserve team for the Colorado Rockies.

Golf enthusiasts have two beautiful courses to choose from in Thornton, with even more options in the metro area. The Thorncreek Golf Course boasts a 72-par championship course. Thorncreek is managed by the City and was recently renovated. This course affords every player the experience they desire, whether that be a challenge or a casual game with friends. Todd Creek Golf Club is an 18-hole championship golf course, originally laid out by legendary course architect Arthur Hills. Both offer rolling terrain and a scenic backdrop of the Rocky Mountains. Optimum Golf and TopGolf are also located in Thornton.

Denver's Regional Transportation District (RTD) offers inexpensive and convenient public transportation. The N Line of the commuter rail service has stops in Thornton. Travel outside of the region is extremely accessible as Denver International Airport is less than 30 miles away. The airport is the 3rd busiest airport in the U.S. and 6th busiest in the world. In 2023, the airport welcomed a record-breaking 77.8 million passengers. The local Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport offers general aviation and charter services, and the Colorado Springs Airport offers additional commercial air travel options.

The Thornton housing market is very competitive, and housing is less expensive here than in the surrounding region. The median home price is around \$500,000, though a larger home with more land will cost around \$800,000. Residents have many options to choose from including single-family homes, apartments, and townhomes. Most residents own their homes. As with any large city, some areas of the community see more crime than others. In comparison to cities in the region, Thornton's crime rate is lower than most. In addition, Thornton's violent crime rate has been lower than the national average since 2018. Most crimes are property or retail theft related.

Thornton has three school districts within its boundaries: Adams 12 Five Star Schools, 27J, and Mapleton Public Schools. Each has

its own personality and style. For example, Adams 12 Five Star Schools is accredited as a Performance District in Colorado. 27J operates on a 4-day school week (Tuesday through Friday) and has 18 STEM and career training options. Mapleton Public Schools has received the prestigious Cognia Accreditation. Students who apply themselves can receive a great education here. Additionally, numerous private and charter school options are available.

Higher education options are plentiful. There are 33 colleges within a 50-mile radius of Denver including, among others, the University of Denver, University of Colorado (Aurora, Boulder, Colorado Springs, and Denver), Colorado School of Mines, University of Northern Colorado, Metropolitan State University of Denver, Colorado Christian University, and Jones International University.

The strong sense of community in Thornton is unique considering its size and location. If you want to live in a diverse city with an abundance of festivals, caring neighbors, every urban amenity nearby, and unparalleled outdoor recreational opportunities, please dust off your resume and apply today. Thornton Colorado is truly a great place to live, work, and play!

## HISTORY

The history of Thornton begins on the Eppinger family farm just north of Denver. This is where developer Sam Hoffman bought 400 acres in 1952 to build an affordable but self-sustaining community. When Hoffman launched an open house to showcase the first three completed homes in 1953, actress Jane Russell decorated the interiors of the homes and attended the open house to sign autographs and promote the new community.

Residents voted to incorporate the area as a City in 1956. At the time, Thornton had a population of 8,640, a radius of one square mile, and was the eleventh largest city in Colorado. Upon incorporation, the community chose to name their burgeoning city "Thornton" after Daniel Thornton, who served as Colorado's Governor and additionally, U.S. ambassador to Korea.

In 1965, Thornton selected its first City Seal via a contest amongst Thornton public school children. "The City of Planned Progress" was the winning design, and it was created by a



Table 1: Thornton, Colorado Demographics

Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
White	60.1%	0 to 15	19.8%
Black	2.1%	15 to 25	15.1%
Asian	5.9%	25 to 45	31.2%
Native American	1.6%	45 to 65	22.6%
Other	30.3%	65 to 85	10.8%
Total	100.0%	Over 85	0.5%
Hispanic Ethnicity (all races)		39.8%	
2024 Estimated Population: 154,061			

Educational Achievements (25 & Over) and Other Statistics	
High School or Higher	51.1%
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	15.8%
Median Age—Thornton	35.2
Median Age—U.S.	39.0
Median Household Income—Thornton	\$105,116
Median Household Income—U.S.	\$74,755
Poverty Rate	8.0%

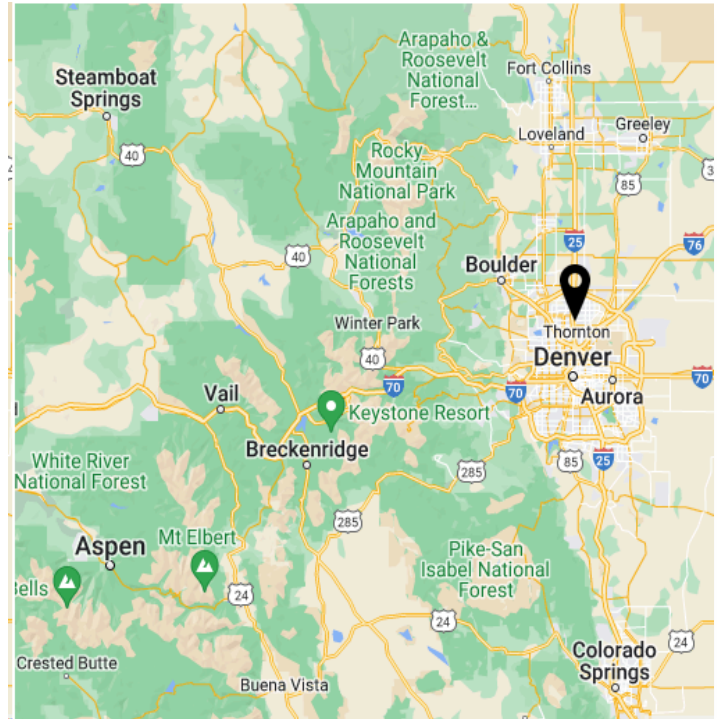
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Mapleton High School student. By 1967, the Thornton community overwhelming voted in favor of making Thornton a Home Rule City and wrote the first City Charter.

The Denver Regional Transportation began construction on the North Metro Rail Line in November of 2013 that runs from the Denver Union Station to 124th Avenue in Thornton, stopping at two additional Thornton locations on the way.

Today Thornton is the 6th largest city in Colorado and will soon be the 5th. It is the largest city in Adams County. The City has experienced rapid growth, from a population of 60,000 in 1994 to over 154,000 today. Ultimately, the city’s population is expected to be approximately 240,000. The City is well-prepared for this growth, having invested hundreds of millions of dollars in infrastructure, including a water project that will provide

Figure 1: Location of Thornton, CO



Thornton with all the water it needs for future growth. The City has a bright future.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Thornton is a diverse community with a strong commitment to quality of life. See Table 1 (left) for Thornton demographics.

## CLIMATE

Thornton is known for its mild climate and sunny days. The City averages over 300 days of sunshine a year. The temperature is rarely below 5°F or above 97°F. The hottest month of the year is July, with an average high of 88°F and low of 61°F. The coldest month of the year is December with an average low of 23°F and high of 45°F.

## GEOGRAPHY

Thornton is characterized by ridgelines, wildlife, waterways, rolling hills, and undeveloped land. Located in the northeast quadrant of the Denver metropolitan area, Thornton is comprised of 37 square miles. The elevation of Thornton is 5,351 feet above sea level. The City is only 20 minutes from

Table 2: Principal Employer Type, Thornton, Colorado

Employer/Industry	Employees
Retail Trade (439 Units) Education	7,735
Health Care and Social Assistance (282 Units)	5,346
Accommodation and Food Services (238 Units)	4,320
Educational Services (81 Units)	3,045
Public Administration (46 Units)	1,884
Other Services (284 Units)	1,803
Construction (208 Units)	1,369
Professional, Service & Tech (176 Units)	1,099
Information (56 Units)	933
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (47 Units)	745

Source: Thornton, CO 2022 ACFR

downtown Denver, 30 minutes from the Denver International Airport, and less than 2 hours from the Breckenridge and Vail ski areas. The Rocky Mountains and multiple national forests are also within a short drive.

## COMMERCE

Founded as a bedroom community, Thornton is strategically located within the Denver metropolitan area. Only ten miles north of downtown Denver and adjacent to Interstate 25, Thornton’s location provides high visibility for businesses and easy access to various transportation routes.

With over 1,400 acres of developable commercial land along the I-25 corridor, Thornton offers plentiful opportunities for commercial development and is easily accessible with its eight (8) interchanges along I-25, three (3) along E-470, and close proximity to I-70, US 36, and the Denver International Airport.

The major employers in Thornton are Amazon, Adams 12 Five Start Schools, the City of Thornton, North Suburban Medical Center, Google, Adams Polishes, Appliance Factory Outlet, American Furniture Warehouse, Main Event, Topgolf, Home Depot, Avaya Inc., Hensel Phelps, Cabela’s, Vibra Hospital,

Sashco, Sam’s Club, Peak Medical of Colorado, Costco, Rocksol Consulting Group Inc., Murphy Company, and Solid Power.

## THE GOVERNMENT

Thornton is a home rule city operating under a Council/Manager form of government. The City Council consists of the Mayor, who is elected at large, and eight council members, two elected from each of the city’s four wards. The Mayor and Councilmembers serve staggered four-year terms, beginning on the first Council meeting following their election. Elections are held every two years, and the elected officials are limited to two terms.

The longest serving member of the Council is the Mayor, who has served six years as a Councilmember and four years as Mayor. One member of the Council has served for over seven years, one has served for over four years, three have served for over two years, and three were seated in the November 2023 election.

The Council appoints the City Manager, City Attorney, and Presiding Municipal Judge. The City Manager manages the day-to-day operations of the City, including hiring and supervising city staff.

The City’s 2024 adopted total budget is \$416,049,498 and its general fund budget is \$197,596,820. The City has 1,142 full-time employees and approximately 575 temporary or seasonal employees. A full-service City, departments include Police (343 FTE), Utilities and Infrastructure (207.5 FTE), Fire (161 FTE), Parks Recreation & Community Programs (142 FTE), Management Services (112 FTE), City Development (76.75 FTE), Finance (33.25 FTE), Legal (17 FTE), Economic Development (8 FTE), Communications (7 FTE). The City Manager’s office has 34 employees of which 12 report direct to the Manager. Services currently contracted to a third party are gas & utility as well as library services through Anythink Libraries. The City is in the process of introducing citywide Broadband, which service will also be contracted out.

Thornton governmental infrastructure has high standards and is award winning. Specifically, it has been awarded the GFOA Triple Crown, which recognizes governments that have received the GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, Popular Annual Financial Reporting Award, and the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. The Police Department is CALEA certified and the Fire Department is accredited. The Economic Crimes Unit has received the Distinguished Service in Policing from the Attorney General. The Communication Center Dispatchers have receive awards from NENA, APCO and NICE. Individual employees have been recognized by the County and the State.

Police Officers and Police Sergeants are part of the FOP Thornton Lodge 16 Union. Police contract negotiations will commence in 2025. Firefighters through Fire Captains are part of the IAFF Local 2376 union. The Fire contract was recently negotiated for a three-year term, which will end in 2027.

## THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As Thornton is only 55% built out, the most significant opportunity is growth. The City had the foresight to purchase land with a water source in the 1980s. For the past five years the City has been working on plans and permits to build a pipeline from the water source to the City and just received the final permit needed. Development has been delayed to some extent due to a lack of resources, but the pipeline will provide the necessary resources to move forward. The City wants smart and strategic growth that will meet the needs of the residents. Currently, much of the workforce is employed outside City limits. Bringing more corporate headquarters and professional opportunities to Thornton will not only benefit the workforce but will help attract the types of amenities and restaurants that residents want. All the pieces will soon be in place, and the next Manager will assist in guiding the growth. Being a visionary, with the ability to see and consider the long-term effects of decisions while also thinking outside the box, will be critical.

Thornton has been a bedroom community since it was established. Currently there is a desire by some to establish an identity and a downtown, while others want the City to maintain its current identity. With land available for growth, and now the infrastructure to support growth, the City is at a crossroads. The

next Manager should plan to work with the Council and the community to envision a positive path forward, and then lead the organization in this direction.

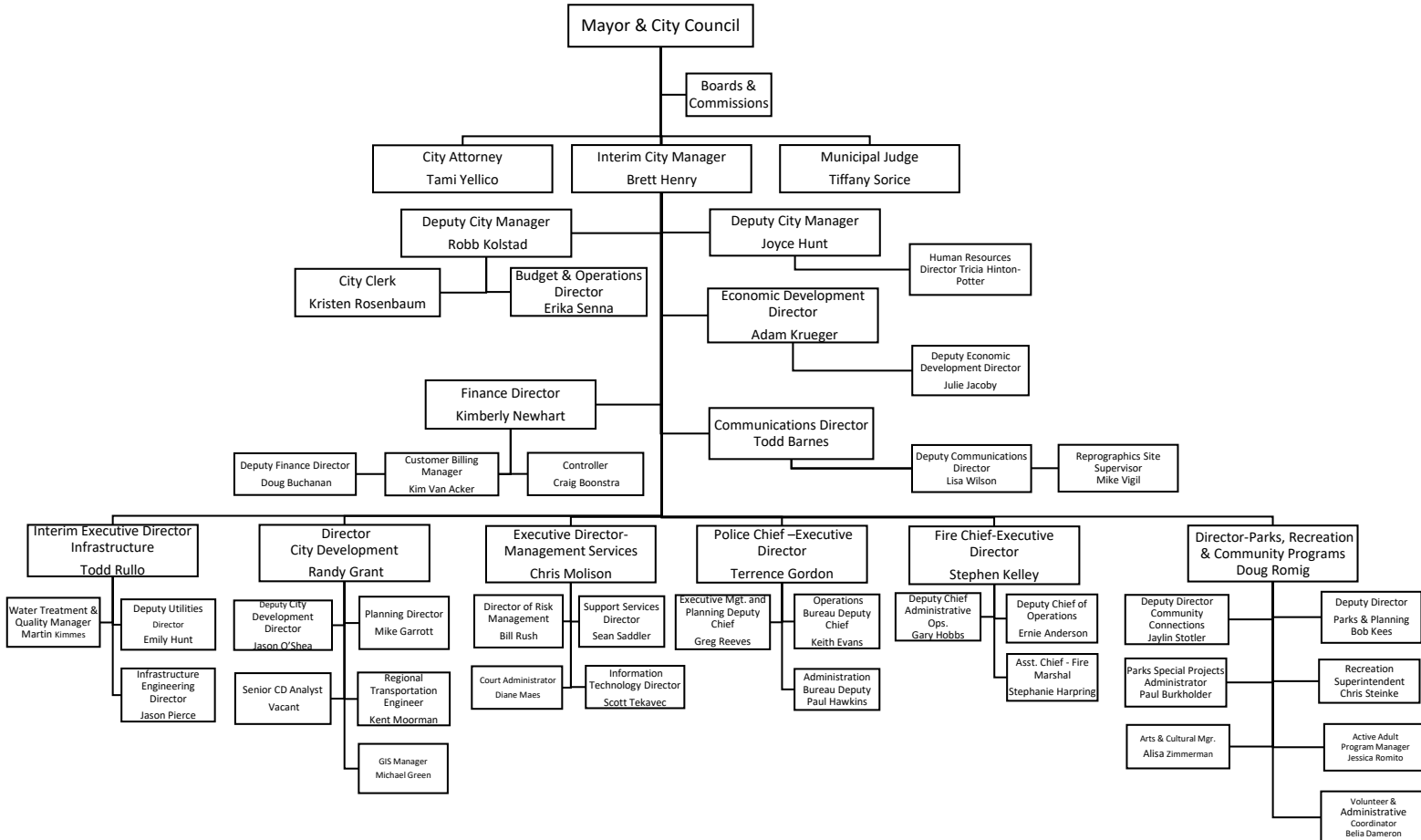
Thornton has grown northward from Denver. The southern part of the City tends to have smaller homes with smaller lots, and the northern part of the City tends to have larger homes with larger lots simply based on the time of construction. The land available for development is in the north and east quadrants of the City. The southern part of Thornton is essentially built-out and needs focus and attention on redevelopment and filling commercial vacancies. It is a diverse community and what is wanted by residents in one Ward may not fit the needs of residents in another Ward, so the solutions are not going to be cookie cutter. The challenge will be to work with each Ward to learn what residents need and want, and then strive to bring those businesses and amenities to that area within the available resources. The next Manager should carefully balance the differing needs of the City, ensuring that attention is given to every segment of the community.

The high level of service that Thornton currently provides to its residents may not be sustainable considering the expected future growth, particularly regarding public safety, and priorities may need to be established. Implementing metrics, measurements, and utilizing resident surveys can help the Council set data driven priorities. Creativity, planning, building relationships in the community, and working with regional partners when appropriate will be essential.

While the organization functions very well, and has very little turnover, it may benefit from a fresh set of eyes. Operations should be reviewed for efficiency and effectiveness, as well as ensuring that departments are appropriately staffed, and the right people are in the right seats. The new Manager will need to establish structure, clarify roles, and provide consistent direction with the staff, the Council, and the Boards.

The Thornton Shopping Center had extensive environmental contamination. The City recently secured the property through eminent domain. Now the hard work begins to address the issues and redevelop the center. The community is excited about the potential of this property but has varying ideas on what the finished product should look like. The next Manager will work

### CITY OF THORNTON



with the Council and community to create a vision for the property. Once a direction has been set, the individual should follow that plan without becoming distracted by other opinions or options.

Other challenges are consistent with a large city. These include ensuring all segments of the community are heard, code enforcement, working with regional partners on homelessness, and additional transportation options within the City as the light rail system is not accessible to those with mobility challenges.

#### THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City Council is seeking an outstanding leader with a demonstrated track record of success and experience working in a large community. While the individual will understand they work for the Council, the elected officials hope to find someone to work with them as a partner, a supporter, and a trusted advisor.

The Manager will be a team player with a strong ability to facilitate relationships with Council Members, City staff, and community and regional partners. The individual will keep Council informed on critical issues in a timely manner and be responsive to Council questions and requests. The successful candidate will develop healthy working relationships with each member of Council and understand the need of balancing the complementary and sometimes competing interests of each member. The ideal candidate will understand that they work for a Board with nine members and will focus on reaching a consensus rather than the majority vote. The Manager will understand the politics but not be involved in them.

The ideal candidate will be intelligent, innovative, upbeat, friendly, outgoing, organized, positive and progressive—someone with a "can do" attitude and who is visionary yet practical. They will be resolute yet flexible, consistent, cheerfully persistent, high energy, and a





leader—not a bureaucrat. The individual will have a healthy sense of impatience, always trying to find ways to accomplish tasks more efficiently and effectively. Seeing the big picture, anticipating where the community will be in twenty years, and working positively in that direction will be essential.

The City expects the next City Manager to have outstanding communication and public relations skills. The best candidate will be someone who can make everyone feel their views are being heard and who will help bring people together. It is important that residents find it easy to work with the government and that they feel welcome even when their requests cannot be accommodated. The manager will believe strongly in transparency, and the public's right to know. The individual will be involved and become a visible presence in the community, thereby developing personal credibility and trust with citizens.

The Manager will help the Council make the best decisions by not just bringing options and recommendations but also the pros and cons, as well as the data supporting each option. Once the Manager has made his/her recommendation, and the Council makes its decision, the individual will relay City Council's policy direction to staff and the community, and facilitate the implementation of those decisions. The next Manager will help the Council, Boards, and staff define and understand their roles. The Manager will work well under pressure and be able to deal with a wide variety of complex issues.

The ideal candidate will motivate staff and build a team atmosphere through effective delegation, communication, and follow-up. The staff is well qualified, so the next Manager does not need to micromanage. The individual will



expect to be kept informed, look for results, and hold employees accountable. The Manager will encourage staff development, provide coaching to subordinates and encourage training and professional development opportunities. Creativity and taking reasonable risks should be fostered while also realizing not every great idea will be successful. As such, the ideal candidate will be approachable, receptive, open, and honest. Outstanding customer/citizen service will be a high priority.

The ability to anticipate/resolve issues before they become problems is critical. Should one erupt, the Manager will not delay but will deal with it promptly and effectively. Growth brings change and the next Manager will need to embrace and implement that change, while not being afraid to make the hard decisions along the way. Good judgment and common sense are essential. A sense of humor and the ability to use it to defuse tense moments is an absolute plus.

Thornton is part of a much larger urban area. Some of its issues can only be addressed on a regional basis or in conjunction with a subset of nearby local governments. Being comfortable working with other municipalities, the local school systems, the county, the state, and the federal government will be important.

In terms of specific skills, the Manager will be able to develop financial plans that are based on sustainable service and funding levels. The list of projects and initiatives is long, and items may need to be prioritized and/or scheduled to prevent undue strain on staff and resources. The individual will have strong experience in capital projects, development, and redevelopment. An understanding of Western water law will be an asset. Experience working in a large community and/or a municipality that has seen tremendous growth, is highly desired.

The position requires a bachelor's degree (or comparable work experience) in business administration, public administration, public policy, or related field plus ten (10) years of experience as a City Manager, Assistant City Manager or Department Head in a local government organization. A master's degree in business, public administration or related field is preferred.

## COMPENSATION

The salary range is \$280,000 to \$350,000. The actual salary will depend on qualifications and experience. Benefits are excellent. The City has both 401(a) and 457 retirement plans available. After five years of employment the City will also contribute to a Retirement Health Savings (RHS) plan for the City Manager.

## THE MOST RECENT CITY MANAGER

The most recent City Manager was hired in 2017 and retired in 2024. The Manager prior to him served for over 32 years.

## RESIDENCY

Residency within City limits is required. The hope is that the next Manager will not just establish a residence in the City, but will become part of the fabric of the community.





## HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your cover letter and resume to [Recruit43@cb-asso.com](mailto:Recruit43@cb-asso.com) by June 7th. Questions should be directed to Lynelle Klein at (970) 433-7189 or Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537.

## INTERNAL CANDIDATES

We anticipate an internal candidate. That said, the Council is committed to a level playing field and everyone will be evaluated on their own merits.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Applications will be confidential until the Finalist selection on July 23rd. Only the names of those selected as Finalists will be released.

## THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened between June 8th and July 7th. Finalists will be selected on July 23rd. A reception and interviews will be held on August 14<sup>th</sup> and August 15th. A selection will be made shortly thereafter.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The City of Thornton is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages women, minorities and veterans to apply.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the city, visit:

[www.thorntonco.gov](http://www.thorntonco.gov)

[www.thorntonareachamber.com](http://www.thorntonareachamber.com)

[www.metronorthchamber.com/thornton-chamber-of-commerce/](http://www.metronorthchamber.com/thornton-chamber-of-commerce/)

[www.uncovercolorado.com/towns/thornton/](http://www.uncovercolorado.com/towns/thornton/)

